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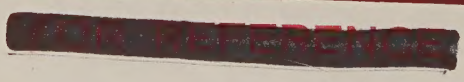

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HIS TENNE TRAGEDIES

TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH

EDITED BY

THOMAS NEWTON

ANNO 1581

With an Introduction by

T. S. ELIOT

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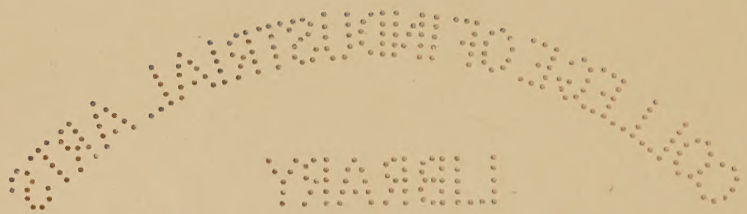

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INTRODUCTION

NO author exercised a wider or deeper influence upon the Elizabethan mind or upon the Elizabethan form of tragedy than did Seneca. To present the Elizabethan translations of the tragedies in their proper setting, it is necessary to deal with three problems which at first may appear to be but slightly connected: (1) the character, virtues and vices of the Latin tragedies themselves; (2) the directions in which these tragedies influenced our Elizabethan drama; (3) the history of these translations, the part they played in extending the influence of Seneca, and their actual merit as translation and as poetry. There are here several questions which, with the greater number of important Tudor translations, do not arise. Most of the better known translations are of authors whose intrinsic merit is unquestioned, and the translations derive some of their prestige from the merit and fame of the author translated; and most of the better known prose translations have an easy beauty of style which arrests even the least prepared reader. But with the present translations (for they are by several hands) we are concerned first of all with a Latin poet whose

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reputation would deter any reader but the most curious; with translations of unequal merit, because by different scholars; and with translation into a metre—the 'fourteener'—which is superficially a mere archaism, and which repels readers who have not the patience to accustom their ears and nerves to its beat. The translations have, as I hope to show, considerable poetic charm and quite adequate accuracy, with occasional flashes of real beauty; their literary value remains greater than that of any later translations of Seneca's tragedies that I have examined, either in English or French. But the appreciation of the literary value of these translations is inseparably engaged with the appreciation of the original and of its historical importance; so that although at first sight a consideration of the historical problems may appear irrelevant, it should in the end enhance our enjoyment of the translations as literature.

I

In the Renaissance, no Latin author was more highly esteemed than Seneca; in modern times, few Latin authors have been more consistently damned. The prose Seneca, the 'Seneca morale' of Dante, still enjoys a measure of tepid praise, though he has no influence; but the poet and tragedian receives from the historians and critics of Latin literature the most universal reprobation. Latin literature provides poets for several tastes, but there is no taste for Seneca. Mackail, for instance, whose taste in Latin literature is almost catholic, dismisses Seneca with half a page of his *Short History of Latin Literature*, and a

few of the usual adjectives such as 'rhetorical.' Professor Mackail is inclined by his training and taste to enjoy the purer and more classical authors, and is inclined by his temperament to enjoy the more romantic: like Shenstone or some other eighteenth-century poets, Seneca falls between. Nisard, in his *Poètes Latins de la décadence*, devotes many pages and much patience to the difference of conditions which produced great tragedy in Athens, and only rhetorical declamation in Rome. Butler, after a more detailed and more tolerant examination from a more literary point of view (*Post-Augustan Poetry*), commits himself to the damaging statement that 'to Seneca more than to 'any other man is due the excessive predominance of de-'clamatory rhetoric, which has characterised the drama 'throughout Western Europe from the Renaissance down 'to the latter half of the nineteenth century.' The most recent critic, Mr. F. L. Lucas (*Seneca and Elizabethan Tragedy*), admits 'the exasperatingly false rhetoric of the 'Senecan stage, with its far-fetched and frigid epigrams.' Yet this is a dramatist whom Scaliger preferred to Euripides, and whom the whole of Europe in the Renaissance delighted to honour. It is obviously a task of some difficulty to disentangle him from his reputation.

We must admit, first, that the tragedies of Seneca deserve the censure that has been directed upon them. On the other hand, it may be true—I think it is true—that the critics, especially the English critics, have been often biassed by Seneca's real and supposed bad influence upon the Renaissance, that they have included the demerits of his admirers in his own faults. But before we proceed to

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what redemption of his fame is possible, it is expedient to resume those universally admitted strictures and limitations which have become commonplaces of Senecan criticism. First, it is pretty generally agreed that the plays of Seneca were composed, not for stage performance, but for private declamation.[1] This theory attenuates the supposed 'horrors' of the tragedies, many of which could hardly have been represented on a stage, even with the most ingenious machinery, without being merely ridiculous; the Renaissance assumption to the contrary gave licence to a taste which would probably have been indulged even without Seneca's authority. And if the plays were written to be declaimed, probably by a single speaker ('elocutionist' is really the word), we can account for other singularities. I say 'account for,' I do not say without qualification that this peculiar form was the 'cause'; for the ultimate cause was probably the same Latin temper which made such an unacted drama possible. The cause lies in the Latin sensibility which is expressed by the Latin language. But if we imagine this unacted drama, we see at once that it is at one remove from reality, compared with the Greek. Behind the dialogue of Greek drama we are always conscious of a concrete visual actuality, and behind that of a specific emotional actuality. Behind the drama of words is the drama of action, the timbre of voice and voice, the uplifted hand or tense muscle, and the particular emotion. The spoken play, the words which

[1] I must admit, however, that this view has recently been contested with great force by Leon Herrmann: *Le Théâtre de Sénèque* (Paris, 1924). See p. 195 of that book.

we read, are symbols, a shorthand, and often, as in the best of Shakespeare, a very abbreviated shorthand indeed, for the acted and felt play, which is always the real thing. The phrase, beautiful as it may be, stands for a greater beauty still. This is merely a particular case of the amazing unity of Greek, the unity of concrete and abstract in philosophy, the unity of thought and feeling, action and speculation, in life. In the plays of Seneca, the drama is all in the word, and the word has no further reality behind it. His characters all seem to speak with the same voice, and at the top of it; they recite in turn.

I do not mean to suggest that the method of delivery of a play of Seneca was essentially different from that of Greek tragedy. It was probably nearer to the declamation of Greek tragedy than was the delivery of Latin comedy. The latter was acted by professional actors. I imagine that Seneca's plays were declaimed by himself and other amateurs, and it is likely that the Athenian tragedies were performed by amateurs. I mean that the beauty of phrase in Greek tragedy is the shadow of a greater beauty—the beauty of thought and emotion. In the tragedies of Seneca the centre of value is shifted from what the personage says to the way in which he says it. Very often the value comes near to being mere smartness. Nevertheless, we must remember that 'verbal' beauty is still a kind of beauty.

The plays were admirably adapted for declamation before an imperial highbrow audience of crude sensibility but considerable sophistication in the ingenuities of language. They would have been as unactable on the Greek

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stage as they are on the English. Superficially neat and trim, they are, for the stage, models of formlessness. The Athenians were accustomed to long speeches from Messengers, speeches which embarrass both the modern actor and the modern audience; this was a convention with practical advantages; their other long speeches usually have some dramatic point, some place in the whole scheme of the play. But the characters in a play of Seneca behave more like members of a minstrel troupe sitting in a semicircle, rising in turn each to do his 'number,' or varying their recitations by a song or a little back-chat. I do not suppose that a Greek audience would have sat through the first three hundred lines of the *Hercules Furens*. Only at the 523rd line does Amphitryon detect the sound of Hercules' tread, ascending from Hell, at which inopportune moment the chorus interrupt for two or three pages. When Hercules finally appears, he seems to be leading Cerberus, who presently evaporates, for he is not on the stage a few minutes later. After Amphitryon has in a rather roundabout way, but more briefly than might have been expected, explained to Hercules the pressing danger to his family and country, Hercules makes off to kill Lycus. While Hercules is thus engaged in a duel on the result of which everybody's life depends, the family sit down calmly and listen to a long description by Theseus of the Tartarean regions. This account is not a straight monologue, as Amphitryon from time to time puts leading questions about the fauna, the administration and system of justice, of the world below. Meanwhile, Hercules has (contrary to the usual belief that

Seneca murders all his victims in full view of the audience) despatched Lycus off-stage. At the end of the play, when Juno has stricken Hercules with madness, it is not at all clear whether he destroys his family on-stage or off. The slaughter is accompanied by a running commentary by Amphitryon, whose business it is to tell the audience what is going forward. If the children are slain in sight of the audience, this commentary is superfluous; Amphitryon also reports the collapse of Hercules; but presently Hercules comes to, certainly on-stage, and spies his dead wife and children. The whole situation is inconceivable unless we assume the play to have been composed solely for recitation; like other of Seneca's plays, it is full of statements useful only to an audience which sees nothing. Seneca's plays might, in fact, be practical models for the modern 'broadcasted drama.'

We need not look too closely into the conditions of the age which produced no genuine drama, but which allowed this curious freak of non-theatrical drama. The theatre is a gift which has not been vouchsafed to every race, even of the highest culture. It has been given to the Hindus, the Greeks, the Japanese (if anything so alien can be included), to the English, the French, and the Spanish, at moments; in less measure to the Teutons and Scandinavians. It was not given to the Romans, or generously to their successors the Italians. The Romans had some success in low comedy, itself an adaptation of Greek models, but their instinct turned to shows and circuses, as does that of the later race which created the Commedia dell' Arte, which still provides the best puppet shows, and

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which gives a home to Mr. Gordon Craig. No cause can be assigned, for every cause demands a further cause. It is handy to speak of 'the genius of the language,' and we shall continue to do so, but why did the language adopt that particular genius? At any rate, we should discourage any criticism which, in accounting for the defects and faults of the plays of Seneca, made much of the 'decadence' of the age of Nero. In the verse, yes, Seneca is unquestionably 'silver age,' or more exactly he is not a poet of the *first* rank in Latin, he is far inferior to Virgil; but for tragic drama, it would be a gross error to suppose that an earlier and more heroic age of Rome could have produced anything better. Many of the faults of Seneca which appear 'decadent' are, after all, merely Roman and (in the narrower sense) Latin.

It is so with the characterisation. The characters of Seneca's plays have no subtlety and, strictly speaking, no 'private life.' But it would be an error to imagine that they are merely cruder and coarser versions of the Greek originals. They belong to a different race. Their crudity is that which was of the Roman, as compared with the Greek, in real life. The Roman was much the simpler creature. At best, his training was that of devotion to the State, his virtues were public virtues. The Greek knew well enough the idea of the State, but he had also a strong traditional morality which constituted, so to speak, a direct relation between him and the gods, without the mediation of the State, and he had furthermore a sceptical and heterodox intelligence. Hence the greater efficiency of the Roman, and the greater interest of the Greek.

Hence the difference between Greek Stoicism and Roman Stoicism—the latter being the form through which Stoicism influenced later Europe. We must think of the characters of Seneca as offspring of Rome, more than we think of them as offspring of their age.

The drama of Antigone—which Seneca did not attempt—could hardly have been transposed for Roman sentiment. In the drama of Seneca there are no conflicts, except the conflict of passion, temper, or appetite with the external duties. The literary consequence, therefore, is the tendency which persists in modern Italy; the tendency to 'rhetoric'; and which, on such a large scale, may be attributed to a development of language exceeding the development of sensibility of the people. If you compare Catullus with Sappho, or Cicero with Demosthenes, or Thucydides with a Latin historian, you find that the genius is the genius of a different language, and what is lost is a gift of sensibility. So with Seneca and the Greek dramatists. Hence we should think of the long ranting speeches of Seneca, the beautiful but irrelevant descriptions, the smart stichomythia, rather as peculiarities of Latin than as the bad taste of the dramatist.

The congeniality of Stoicism to the Roman mind is no part of my duty to analyse; and it would be futile to attempt to decide what, in the dialogue and characterisation of Seneca's plays, is due to Stoicism, what due to the Roman mind, and what due to the peculiar form which Seneca elected. What is certain is the existence of a large element of Stoicism in the plays, enough to justify the belief that the plays and the prose are by the hand of the

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same Seneca. In the plays, indeed, the Stoicism is present in a form more quickly to catch the fancy of the Renaissance than in the prose epistles and essays. Half of the commonplaces of the Elizabethans—and the more commonplace half—are of Senecan origin. This ethic of sententious maxims was, as we shall see, much more sympathetic to the temper of the Renaissance than would have been the morals of the elder Greek dramatists; the Renaissance itself was much more Latin than Greek. In the Greek tragedy, as Nisard and others have pointed out, the moralising is not the expression of a conscious 'system' of philosophy; the Greek dramatists moralise only because morals are woven through and through the texture of their tragic idea. Their morals are a matter of feeling trained for generations, it is hereditary and religious, just as their dramatic forms themselves are the development of their early liturgies. Their ethics of thought are one with their ethics of behaviour. As the dramatic form of Seneca is no growth, but a construction, so is his moral philosophy and that of Roman Stoicism in general. Whether the Roman scepticism was, as Nisard suggests, the result of a too rapid and great expansion and mixture of races cancelling each other's beliefs, rather than the product of a lively inquiring intelligence, the 'beliefs' of Stoicism are a consequence of scepticism; and the ethic of Seneca's plays is that of an age which supplied the lack of moral habits by a system of moral attitudes and poses. To this the natural public temper of Rome contributed. The ethic of Seneca is a matter of postures. The posture which gives the greatest opportunity for effect, hence for

the Senecan morality, is the posture of dying: death gives his characters the opportunity for their most sententious aphorisms—a hint which Elizabethan dramatists were only too ready to follow.

When all reserves have been made, there is still much to be said for Seneca as a dramatist. And I am convinced that the proper approach to his appreciation and enjoyment is not by comparison and contrast—to which, in his case, criticism is violently tempted—but by isolation. I made a careful comparison of the *Medea* and the *Hippolytus* of Seneca—perhaps his two best plays—with the *Medea* of Euripides and the *Phèdre* of Racine respectively; but I do not think that any advantage would be gained by reporting the results of this inquiry, by contrasting either the dramatic structure or the treatment of the title figures. Such comparisons have already been made; they magnify the defects and obscure the merits of the Senecan tragedy. If Seneca is to be compared, he should rather be compared for versification, descriptive and narrative power, and taste, with the earlier Roman poets. The comparison is fair, though Seneca comes off rather ill. His prosody is monotonous; in spite of a mastery of several metres, his choruses fall heavily on the ear. Sometimes his chorus rhythms seem to hover between the more flexible measures of his predecessors and the stiffer but more impressive beat of the mediaeval hymn.[1] But within the limits of his declamatory purpose, Seneca obtains, time after time,

[1] *E.g.* 'O mors amoris una sedamen mali,
O mors pudoris maximum laesi decus.
(*Hippolytus*, 1188-89).

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magnificent effects. In the verbal *coup de théâtre* no one has ever excelled him. The final cry of Jason to Medea departing in her car is unique ; I can think of no other play which reserves such a shock for the last word :

> ' Per alta vada spatia sublimi aethere ;
> testare nullos esse, qua veheris, deos.' [1]

Again and again the epigrammatic observation on life or death is put in the most telling way at the most telling moment. It is not only in his brief ejaculations that Seneca triumphs. The sixteen lines addressed by the chorus to the dead sons of Hercules (*Hercules Furens*, 1., 1135 ff.), which are exquisitely rendered by our translator, seem to me highly pathetic. The descriptive passages are often of great charm, with phrases which haunt us more than we should expect. The lines of Hercules,

> ' ubi sum ? sub ortu solis, an sub cardine
> glacialis ursae ? '

must have lain long in the memory of Chapman before they came out in *Bussy d'Ambois* as

> ' fly where men feel
> The cunning axle-tree, or those that suffer
> Under the chariot of the snowy Bear.'

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[1] Here, by the way, our translator (vol. ii. p. 98) seems to me to have hit on the sense :

> ' Bear witnesse, grace of God is none in place of thy repayre.'

A modern translator (Professor Miller, editing the Loeb Translation text) gives ' bear witness, where thou ridest, that there are no gods.' It seems to me more effective if we take the meaning to be that there are no gods *where* (*ever*) *Medea is*, instead of a mere outburst of atheism. But the old Farnaby edition observes ' testimonium contra deorum justitiam, vel argumento nullos esse in caelo deos.'

Though Seneca is long-winded, he is not diffuse; he is capable of great concision; there is even a monotony of forcefulness; but many of his short phrases have for us as much oratorical impressiveness as they had for the Elizabethans. As (to take an unworn example) the bitter words of Hecuba as the Greeks depart:

> 'concidit virgo ac puer;
> bellum peractum est.'

Even the most sententious sayings of stoical commonplace preserve their solemnity in that Latin language which carries such thoughts more grandly than could any other:

> 'Fatis agimur; cedite fatis.
> non sollicitae possunt curae
> mutare rati stamina fusi.
> quidquid patimur mortale genus,
> quidquid facimus venit ex alto,
> servatque suae decreta colus
> Lachesis nulla revoluta manu.
> omnia secto tramite vadunt
> primusque dies dedit extremum.'
>
> (*Œdipus*, 980 ff.)

But to quote Seneca is not criticism; it is merely to offer baits to a possible reader; it would indeed be bad criticism if we left the impression that these and such as these are moments in which Seneca excels himself, and which he could not sustain. An essential point to make about Seneca is the consistency of his writing, its maintenance on one level, below which he seldom falls and above which he never mounts. Seneca is not one of those poets who are to be remembered because they now and then rise to the tone and the vocabulary of greater poets. Seneca is

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wholly himself; what he attempted he executed, he created his own genre. And this leads us to a consideration which we must keep in mind in considering his later influence: whether we can treat him seriously as a *dramatist*. Critics are inclined to treat his drama as a bastard form. But this is an error which critics of the drama are in general apt to make; the forms of drama are so various that few critics are able to hold more than one or two in mind in pronouncing judgment of 'dramatic' and 'undramatic.' What is 'dramatic'? If one were saturated in the Japanese Noh, in Bhasa and Kalidasa, in Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides, Aristophanes and Menander, in the popular mediaeval plays of Europe, in Lope de Vega and Calderon, as well as the great English and French drama, and if one were (which is impossible) equally sensitive to them all, would one not hesitate to decide that one form is more dramatic than another? And Seneca's is definitely a 'form.' It does not fall within either of the categories of the defectively dramatic. There are the 'closet dramas' which are mostly simply inferior dramas: the plays of Tennyson, Browning, and Swinburne. (Whether a writer expected his play to be played or not is irrelevant, the point is whether it is playable.) And there is another, more interesting type, where the writer is trying to do something more or something different from what the stage can do, but yet with an implication of performance, where there is a mixture of dramatic and extra-dramatic elements. This is a modern and sophisticated form: it contains *The Dynasts*, Goethe's *Faust*, and possibly (not having seen it played I cannot speak with confidence) *Peer Gynt*. Seneca's plays

do not belong to either of these types. If, as I confidently believe, they are intended for *recitation*, they have a form of their own ; and I believe that they were intended for recitation because they are perfectly adapted for recitation —they are better recited than read. And I have no doubt —though there is no external evidence—that Seneca must have had considerable practice himself in reciting the plays. He would have been, therefore, a playwright of as practical experience as Shakespeare or Molière. His form is a practical form ; it is even, I suggest, a form which might be interesting to attempt in our own time, when the revival of the theatre is obstructed by some of the difficulties which made the stage an impossibility in the age of Seneca.

What lessons the Elizabethans learnt from Seneca, and whether they were the same as those which we might learn ourselves, is the next subject to consider. But whether they profited by the study, or whether they admired him and pillaged him to their own detriment, we must remember that we cannot justly estimate his influence unless we form our own opinion of Seneca first, without being influenced by his influence.

II

The influence of Seneca upon Elizabethan drama has received much more attention from scholars than from literary critics. The historical treatment has been very thorough. The admirable edition of the works of Sir William Alexander, Earl of Stirling, by Kastner and Charlton (Manchester University Press, vol. I., 1921), has a full account of this influence both direct and through

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Italy and France; in this introduction also will be found the best bibliography of the subject. Dr. F. S. Boas, especially in his edition of Kyd's Plays, has treated the matter at length. Professor J. W. Cunliffe's *Influence of Seneca on Elizabethan Tragedy* (1893) remains, within its limits, the most useful of all books, and Mr. Cunliffe has handled the question in a more general way in his *Early English Classical Tragedies*. Indirect Senecan influences have also been studied in detail, as in Professor A. M. Witherspoon's *Influence of Robert Garnier on Elizabethan Drama*. And work which is now being done on the earlier drama (cf. Dr. A. W. Reed's recent *Early Tudor Drama*, 1926) will enable us to understand better the junction of the Senecan influence with the native tradition. It is not fitting that a literary critic should retrace all this labour of scholarship, where either his dissent or his approval would be an impertinence; but we may benefit by this scholarship to draw certain general conclusions.

The plays of Seneca exerted their influence in several ways and to several results. The results are of three main types: (1) the popular Elizabethan tragedy; (2) the 'Senecal' drama, pseudo-classical, composed by and for a small and select body of persons not closely in touch or in sympathy with the popular drama of the day, and composed largely in protest against the defects and monstrosities of that drama; (3) the two Roman tragedies of Ben Jonson, which appear to belong between the two opposed classes, to constitute an attempt, by an active practising playwright, to improve the form of popular drama by the example of Seneca; not by slavish imitation

but by adaptation, to make of popular drama a finished work of art. As for the ways in which Seneca influenced the Elizabethans, it must be remembered that these were never simple, and became more complicated. The Italian and the French drama of the day was already penetrated by Seneca. Seneca was a regular part of the school curriculum, while Greek drama was unknown to all but a few great scholars. Every schoolboy with a smattering of Latin had a verse or two of Seneca in his memory; probably a good part of the audiences could recognise the origin of the occasional bits of Seneca which are quoted in Latin in some of the popular plays (*e.g.* several times by Marston). And by the time that *The Spanish Tragedy* and the old *Hamlet* had made their success, the English playwright was under the influence of Seneca by being under the influence of his own predecessors. Here the influence of Kyd is of the greatest importance: if Senecan Kyd had such a vogue, that was surely the path to facile success for any hard-working and underpaid writer.

All that I wish to do in this Introduction is to consider certain misconceptions of the Senecan influence, which I believe are still current in our opinions of Elizabethan damra, although they do not appear in works of scholarship. For such a purpose these contemporary translations possess a particular value: whether they greatly affected the conception of Seneca, or greatly extended his influence, they give a reflection of the appearance of Seneca to the Englishman of the time. I do not suggest that the influence of Seneca has been exaggerated or diminished in modern criticism; but I believe that too much importance has been

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attached to his influence in some directions, and too little to his influence in others. There is one point on which every one is agreed, and hardly more than one: the five-act division of the modern European play is due to Seneca. What I chiefly wish to consider are, first, his responsibility for what has been called since Symonds' day the Tragedy of Blood—how far Seneca is the author of the horrors which disfigure Elizabethan drama; second, his responsibility for *bombast* in Elizabethan diction; and third, his influence upon the *thought*, or what passes for thought, in the drama of Shakespeare and his contemporaries. It is the first which I think has been overestimated, the second misconstrued, the third undervalued.

Certainly, among all national dramas, the Elizabethan tragedies are remarkable for the extent to which they employ the horrible and revolting. It is true that but for this taste and practice we should never have had *King Lear* or *The Duchess of Malfy*; so impossible is it to isolate the vices from the virtues, the failures from the masterpieces of Elizabethan tragedy. We cannot reprehend a custom but for which one great experiment of the human spirit must have been left unmade, even if we cannot like it; nor can we wholly deplore anything which brings with it some information about the soul. And even leaving Shakespeare apart, the genius of no other race could have manipulated the tragedy of horror into the magnificent farce of Marlowe, or the magnificent nightmare of Webster. We must therefore reserve two measures of comparison: one, that between the baser tragedy of the time and the best tragedy of the time, the other (which is perhaps a moral

measure, the application of which would lead us too far for the present discussion) between the tragedy of the time as a whole and another tragedy of horror—we think of Dante's Ugolino and the Œdipus of Sophocles—in which, in the end, the mind seems to triumph. Here, the question of Seneca's influence is capital. If the taste for horror was a result of being trained on Seneca, then it has neither justification nor interest; if it was something inherent in the people and in the age, and Seneca merely the excuse and precedent, then it is a phenomenon of interest. Even to speak of Seneca as offering a precedent and excuse is probably to falsify; for it implies that the Elizabethans would otherwise have been a little uneasy in conscience at indulging such tastes—which is ridiculous to suppose. They merely assumed that Seneca's taste was like their own—which is not *wholly* untrue; and that Seneca represented the whole of classical antiquity—which is quite false. Where Seneca took part is in affecting the type of plot; he supported one tendency against another. But for Seneca, we might have had more plays in the *Yorkshire Tragedy* mould; that is to say, the equivalent of the *News of the World* murder report; Seneca, and particularly the Italianised Seneca, encouraged the taste for the foreign, remote, or exotic. No doubt *The Jew of Malta* or *Titus Andronicus* would have made the living Seneca shudder with genuine aesthetic horror; but his influence helped to recommend work with which he had little in common.

When we examine the plays of Seneca, the actual horrors are not so heinous or so many as are supposed. The most unpleasantly sanguinary is the *Thyestes*, a subject which,

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so far as we know, was not attempted by a Greek dramatist. Even here, if the view that the tragedies were intended only for recitation is true, the cultivated Roman audience were listening to a story which was part of their Hellenic culture, and which is in fact a common property of folklore. The story was sanctified by time. The plots of Elizabethan tragedy were, so far as the audience were concerned, novelties. This plot of *Thyestes* is not employed by any Elizabethan, but the play has undoubtedly more in common with the Tragedy of Blood, especially in its early form, than any other of Seneca's. It has a particularly tedious Ghost. It has, more emphatically than any other, the motive of Revenge, unregulated by any divine control or justice. Yet even in the *Thyestes* the performance of the horrors is managed with conventional tact; the only visible horror is the perhaps unavoidable presentation of the evidence—the children's heads in a dish.

The most significant popular play under Senecan influence is of course *The Spanish Tragedy*, and the further responsibility of Kyd for the translation of the pseudo-Senecan *Cornelia* of Garnier has marked him as the disciple of Seneca. But in *The Spanish Tragedy* there is another element, not always sufficiently distinguished from the Senecan, which (though it may have relations among the Italian Renaissance progeny of Seneca) allies it to something more indigenous. The Senecan apparatus, it is true, is impressive. The Ghost, and Revenge, who replace the Tantalus and the Fury of the *Thyestes*, use all the infernal allusions—Acheron, Charon, and the rest—so dear to Seneca. Temporary insanity is an expedient well known

to Seneca. But in the type of plot there is nothing classical or pseudo-classical at all. 'Plot' in the sense in which we find plot in *The Spanish Tragedy* does not exist for Seneca at all. He took a story perfectly well known to everybody, and interested his auditors entirely by his embellishments of description and narrative and by smartness and pungency of dialogue; suspense and surprise attached solely to verbal effects. *The Spanish Tragedy*, like the series of Hamlet plays, including Shakespeare's, has an affinity to our contemporary detective drama.[1] The plot of Hieronymo to compass his revenge by the play allies it with a small but interesting class of drama which certainly owes nothing essential to Seneca: that which includes *Arden of Feversham*[2] and *The Yorkshire Tragedy*. These two remarkable plays are both based on contemporary or recent crimes committed in England. Unless it be the hint of divine retribution in the epilogue to *Arden*, there is no token of foreign or classical influence in these two plays. Yet they are bloody enough. The husband in *The Yorkshire Tragedy* kills his two young sons, throws the servant downstairs and breaks her neck, and nearly succeeds in killing his wife. In *Arden of Feversham* the wife and her conspirators stab the husband to death upon the stage—the rest of the play being occupied by a primitive but effective police inquiry into evidence. It is only sur-

[1] I suggest also that besides *Hamlet*, *Macbeth* and to some extent *Othello* among Shakespeare's major tragedies have this 'thriller' interest, whilst it is not introduced into *King Lear*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, or *Coriolanus*.

[2] I dissent from Dr. Boas, and agree with that body of opinion which attributes *Arden* to Kyd, e.g. Fleay, Robertson, Crawford, Dugdale Sykes, Oliphant.

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prising that there are not more examples of this type of play, since there is evidence of as lively a public interest in police court horrors as there is to-day. One of the pieces of evidence is associated with Kyd; it is a curious little account of a poisoning case, *The Murder of John Brewen.* (A little later, Dekkar was to supply the deficiency of penny journalism with his Plague Pamphlets.) In Kyd, whether *Arden* be by him or by an imitator, we find the union of Senecan with native elements, to the advantage of both For the Senecan influence is felt in the structure of the play—the structure of *The Spanish Tragedy* is more dramatic than that of *Arden* or *The Yorkshire Tragedy*; whilst the material of *The Spanish Tragedy*, like that of the other two plays, is quite different from the Senecan material, and much more satisfying to an unlettered audience.

The worst that can be urged against Seneca, in the matter of responsibility for what is disgusting in Elizabethan drama, is that he may have provided the dramatist with a pretext or justification for horrors which were not Senecan at all, for which there was certainly a taste, and the taste for which would certainly have been gratified at that time whether Seneca had ever written or not. Against my use of *The Yorkshire Tragedy*, it may be said that this play (the crime in question was committed only in 1603) and *Arden* also were written after the success of *The Spanish Tragedy*, and that the taste for horrors developed only after it had received Senecan licence. I cannot *prove* the contrary. But it must be admitted that the greater number of the horrors are such as Seneca him-

self would not have tolerated. In one of the worst offenders —indeed one of the stupidest and most uninspired plays ever written, a play in which it is incredible that Shakespeare had any hand at all, a play in which the best passages would be too highly honoured by the signature of Peele—in *Titus Andronicus*[1]—there is nothing really Senecan at all. There is a wantonness, an irrelevance, about the crimes of which Seneca would never have been guilty. Seneca's Œdipus has the traditional justification for blinding himself; and the blinding itself is far less offensive than that in *Lear*. In *Titus*, the hero cuts off his own hand in view of the audience, who can also testify to the mutilation of the hands and the tongue of Lavinia. In *The Spanish Tragedy*, Hieronymo bites out his own tongue. There is nothing like this in Seneca.

But if this is very unlike Seneca, it is very like the contemporary drama of Italy. Nothing could better illustrate the accidental character of literary 'influence'—accidental, that is, with reference to the work exercising the influence —than the difference between Senecan drama in Italy and in France. The French drama is from the beginning restrained and decorous; to the French drama, especially to Garnier, the Senecan drama of Greville, Daniel and Alexander is allied. The Italian is bloodthirsty in the extreme. Kyd knew both; but it was to the Italian that he and Peele yielded themselves with sympathetic delight. We must remember, too, that Italy had developed stagecraft and stage machinery to the highest point—for the

[1] See J. M. Robertson: *An Introduction to the Study of the Shakespeare Canon.*

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deeply influenced by Seneca in language, than the *True Tragedy of Richard Duke of York*, and the Shakespearean *Richard II.* and *Richard III.* These, with the work of Kyd and that of Marlowe and of Peele, and several of the plays included in the Shakespeare Apocrypha, have a great deal in common.

The precise pilferings and paraphrases have been thoroughly catalogued by the scholars I have mentioned, and others; hardly a dramatist between Kyd and Massinger who is not many times indebted to Seneca. Instead of repeating this labour, I prefer to call attention to his universal influence. Not only the evolution of the dramatic structure, but the evolution of the blank verse cadence, took place under the shadow of Seneca; it is hardly too much to say that Shakespeare could not have formed the verse instrument which he left to his successors, Webster, Massinger, Tourneur, Ford, and Fletcher, unless he had received an instrument already highly developed by the genius of Marlowe and the influence of Seneca. Blank verse before 1600, or thereabouts, is a crude form of music compared to blank verse after that date; but its progress in fifteen years had been astonishing. In the first place, I believe that the establishment of blank verse as the vehicle of drama, instead of the old fourteener, or the heroic couplet, or (what might have happened) a particular form of prose rhythm, received considerable support from its being obviously the nearest equivalent to the solemnity and weight of the Senecan iambic. A comparison of the trotting metre of our translations with Surrey's translation of Virgil will show, I think, that while the former

has undeniable poetic charms of its own, the latter would reveal more resources to the ear of the dramatist. The pre-Marlowe versification is competent, but extremely monotonous; it is literally a *monotone*, containing none of the musical counter-rhythms which Marlowe introduced, nor the rhythms of individual speech which were later added.

> 'When this eternal substance of my soul
> Did live imprison'd in my wanton flesh,
> Each in their function serving other's need,
> I was a courtier in the Spanish court:'
> (Prologue, *Spanish Tragedy*, xxx.)

But to illustrate the early use of this metre under Senecan influence, a worse play serves our purpose better; the Senecan content justifies our quoting at some length from *Locrine*, an early play [1] of no merit whatever. Here is the Revival of Learning in the brain of a fourth-rate playwright:

> HUMBER. Where may I find some desert wilderness,
> Where I may breathe out curses as I would,
> And scare the earth with my condemning voice;
> Where every echo's repercussion
> May help me to bewail mine overthrow,
> And aid me in my sorrowful laments?
> Where may I find some hollow uncouth rock,
> Where I may damn, condemn, and ban my fill
> The heavens, the hell, the earth, the air, the fire,
> And utter curses to the concave sky,

[1] Usually attributed to Greene, and dated about 1585 (see Brooke, *Shakespeare Apocrypha*). Neither authorship nor date is important for my purpose: the play was obviously written by some one who had not yet experienced the influence of Marlowe.

Which may infect the airy regions,
And light upon the Brittain Locrine's head ?
You ugly sprites that in Cocytus mourn,
And gnash your teeth with dolorous laments :
You fearful dogs that in black Lethe howl,
And scare the ghosts with your wide open throats :
You ugly ghosts that, flying from these dogs,
Do plunge yourselves in Puryflegiton :
Come, all of you, and with your shriking notes
Accompany the Brittain's conquering host.
Come, fierce Erynnys, horrible with snakes ;
Come, ugly Furies, armed with your whips ;
You threefold judges of black Tartarus,
And all the army of you hellish fiends,
With new-found torments rack proud Locrine's bones !
O gods, and stars ! damned be the gods and stars
That did not drown me in fair Thetis' plains !
Curst be the sea, that with outrageous waves,
With surging billows did not rive my ships
Against the rocks of high Cerannia,
Or swallow me into her wat'ry gulf !
Would God we had arriv'd upon the shore
Where Polyphemus and the Cyclops dwell,
Or where the bloody Anthropophagi
With greedy jawes devours the wand'ring wights !

Enter the ghost of ALBANACT

But why comes Albanact's bloody ghost,
To bring a corsive to our miseries ?
Is 't not enough to suffer shameful flight,
But we must be tormented now with ghosts,
With apparitions fearful to behold ?

GHOST. Revenge ! revenge for blood !

HUMBER. So nought will satisfy your wand'ring ghost
But dire revenge, nothing but Humber's fall,
Because he conquered you in Albany.

> Now, by my soul, Humber would be condemned
> To Tantal's hunger or Ixion's wheel,
> Or to the vulture of Prometheus,
> Rather than that this murther were undone.
> When as I die I 'll drag thy cursed ghost
> Through all the rivers of foul Erebus,
> Through burning sulphur of the Limbo-lake,
> To allay the burning fury of that heat
> That rageth in mine everlasting soul.
> GHOST. *Vindicta, vindicta.* [*Exeunt.*

This is the proper Ercles bombast, ridiculed by Shakespeare, Jonson, and Nashe. From this, even to *Tamburlaine*, is a long way; it is too absurdly distorted to serve even as a burlesque of Seneca; but the metre has something Senecan about it. From such verse there is a long distance to the melodies of

> 'Now comes my lover tripping like a roe,
> And brings my longings tangled in her hair.'

or

> 'Welcome, my son: who are the violets now
> That strew the green lap of the new-come spring?'

or

> 'But look, the morn, in russet mantle clad,
> Walks o'er the dew of yon high eastern hill:'

that is to say, to the *lyrical* phase of blank verse, before Shakespeare had analysed it into true dramatic differentiation; it belongs to the first or *declamatory* phase. But this declamation is in its impulse, if not in its achievement, Senecan; and progress was made, not by rejection, but by dissociating this type of verse into products with special properties.

The next stage also was reached with the help of a hint

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from Seneca. Several scholars, Butler in particular, have called attention to a trick of Seneca of repeating one word of a phrase in the next phrase, especially in stichomythia, where the sentence of one speaker is caught up and twisted by the next. This was an effective stage trick, but it is something more ; it is the crossing of one rhythm pattern with another.

> ' — Sceptrone nostro *famulus* est potior tibi ?
> — Quot iste *famulus* tradidit *reges* neci.
> — Cur ergo *regi* servit et patitur iugum ? '
>
> (*Hercules.*)

Seneca also gets a kind of double pattern by breaking up lines into minimum antiphonal units :

> ' Rex est timendus.
> Rex meus fuerat pater.
> Non metuis arma ?
> Sint licet terra edita.
> Moriere.
> Cupio.
> Profuge.
> Paenituit fugae.
> Medea,
> Fiam.
> Mater es.
> Cui sim vides.'
>
> (*Medea*, 168 ff.)

A man like Marlowe, or even men with less scholarship and less genius for the use of words than he, could hardly have failed to learn something from this. At any rate, I believe that the study of Seneca had its part in the formation of verse like the following :

' — Wrong not her birth, she is of royal blood.
— To save her life, I 'll say she is not so.
— Her life is safest only in her birth.
— And only in that safety died her brothers.'

It is only a step (and a few lines further) to the pun :

' Cousins, indeed ; and by their uncle cozen'd.'

Some of the effects in such plays as *Richard II.* and *Richard III.* are indeed of pre-Marlowe origin, as :

' I had an Edward, till a Richard kill'd him ;
I had a Henry, till a Richard kill'd him ;
Thou hadst an Edward, till a Richard kill'd him ;
Thou hadst a Richard, till a Richard kill'd him.'

which is already in even *Locrine*, as :

' The boisterous Boreas thundreth forth Revenge,
The stony rocks cry out on sharp revenge,
The thorny bush pronounceth dire revenge,'

but in the following lines from Clarence's Dream we see an immense advance over *Locrine* in the use of infernal machinery :

' I pass'd, methought, the melancholy flood,
With that grim ferryman which poets write of,
Unto the kingdom of perpetual night.
The first that there did greet my stranger soul,
Was my great father-in-law, renowned Warwick ;
Who cried aloud, " What scourge for perjury
Can this dark monarchy afford false Clarence ? " ' [1]

The ' kingdom of perpetual night ' and the last two lines are a real approximation in English to the magnificence of Senecan Latin at its best ; they are far from being a mere

[1] I once expressed the opinion that these lines must be by Shakespeare. I am not so confident now. See J. M. Robertson : *The Shakespeare Canon*, Part II.

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burlesque. The best of Seneca has here been absorbed into English.

In *Richard II.*, which is usually dated a little earlier than *Richard III.*, I find such interesting variations of versification that I am convinced that it is a slightly later play,[1] or else that there is more of Shakespeare in it. There is the same play of words :

> ' Give Richard leave to live till Richard die.
> A brittle glory shineth in this face ;
> As brittle as the glory is the face.'

but there is less stichomythia, less mere repetition, and a dexterity in retaining and developing the same rhythm with greater freedom and less obvious calculation. (See the long speeches of Richard in Act III., sc. ii. and sc. iii., and compare with the more carefully balanced verses of Queen Margaret's tirade in *Richard III.*, Act IV., sc. iv.)

When blank verse has reached this point, and passed into the hands of its greatest master, there is no need to look for fresh infusions of Seneca. He has done his work, and the one influence on later dramatic blank verse is the influence of Shakespeare. Not that later dramatists do not make great use of Seneca's plays. Chapman uses him, and employs the old machinery ; but Seneca's influence on Chapman was chiefly on Chapman's ' thought.' Jonson uses Seneca deliberately ; the superb prologues of ' Envy ' and ' Sylla's Ghost ' are adaptations of the Senecan ghost-prologue form, not an inheritance from Kyd. Massinger,

[1] I do not deny that some parts, or some lines, of *Richard III.* are later than *Richard II.* Both plays may have undergone revision from time to time, and in any case must be dated near together.

a most accomplished dramatist and versifier, sometimes falls back most lamentably upon ghosts and spectacles. But the verse is formed, and Seneca no further responsible for its vices or virtues.

Certainly, Elizabethan bombast can be traced to Seneca; Elizabethans themselves ridiculed the Senecan imitation. But if we reflect, not on the more grotesque exaggerations, but on the dramatic poetry of the first half of the period, as a whole, we see that Seneca had as much to do with its merits and its progress as with its faults and its delays. Certainly it is all 'rhetorical,' but if it had not been rhetorical, would it have been anything? Certainly it is a relief to turn back to the austere, close language of *Everyman*, the simplicity of the mysteries; but if new influences had not entered, old orders decayed, would the language not have left some of its greatest resources unexplored? Without bombast, we should not have had *King Lear*. The art of dramatic language, we must remember, is as near to oratory as to ordinary speech or to other poetry. On the stage, M. Jean Cocteau reminds us, we must weave a pattern of coarse rope that can be apprehended from the back of the pit, not a pattern of lace that can only be apprehended from the printed page. We are not entitled to try fine effects unless we achieve the coarse ones. If the Elizabethans distorted and travestied Seneca in some ways, if they learned from him tricks and devices which they applied with inexpert hands, they also learned from him the essentials of declaimed verse. Their subsequent progress is a process of splitting up the primitive rhetoric, developing out of it subtler poetry and subtler

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tones of conversation, eventually mingling, as no other school of dramatists has done, the oratorical, the conversational, the elaborate and the simple, the direct and the indirect; so that they were able to write plays which can still be viewed as plays, with any plays, and which can still be read as poetry, with any poetry.

It is improper to pass from the questions of Seneca's influence upon the Tragedy of Blood and upon the language of the Elizabethans without mentioning the group of 'Senecal' plays, largely produced under the aegis of the Countess of Pembroke. The history of this type of play belongs rather to the history of scholarship and culture than to the history of the Drama: it begins in a sense with the household of Sir Thomas More, and therefore is doubly allied to the present subject by our translator Jasper Heywood; it is continued in the conversations at Cambridge of Mr. Ascham, Mr. Watson, and Mr. (later Sir John) Cheke. The first to attack openly the common stage was Sir Philip Sidney, whose words are well known:

'Our Tragedies and Comedies (not without cause cried out against), observing rules neither of honest civility nor of skilful Poetry, excepting *Gorboduc* (againe, I say, of those that I have seen), which notwithstanding, as it is full of stately speeches and well sounding Phrases, climbing to the height of Seneca his style, and as full of notable morality, which it doth most delightfully teach, and so obtain the very end of Poesie, yet in troth it is very defectious in the circumstances, which grieveth me, because it might not remain as an exact model of all Tragedies. For it is faulty both in place and time, the two necessary companions of all corporal actions. . . But if it be so in *Gorboduc*, how much more in all the rest, where you shall have Asia of the one side,

and Afric of the other, and so many other under-kingdoms, that the Player, when he cometh in, must ever begin with telling where he is: or else the tale will not be conceived? Now ye shall have three Ladies walk to gather flowers, and then we must believe the stage to be a Garden. By and by, we hear news of shipwrack in the same place, and then we are to blame if we accept it not for a Rock.'

It was after Sidney's death that his sister, the Countess of Pembroké, tried to assemble a body of wits to compose drama in the proper Senecan style, to make head against the popular melodrama of the time. Great poetry should be both an art and a diversion; in a large and cultivated public like the Athenian it can be both; the shy recluses of Lady Pembroke's circle were bound to fail. But we must not draw too sharp a line of separation between the careful workman who laboured to create a classical drama in England and the hurried purveyors of playhouse successes: the two worlds were not without communication, and the work of the earlier Senecals was not without fruit.

With the part played by our *Tenne Tragedies* in this Senecan tradition I shall deal in the next section of this essay. Here, I wish only to call attention to certain characteristics of Senecal Tragedy in its final form, in the work of Greville, Daniel and Alexander. I would only remind the reader that these final Senecal plays were written after any real hope of altering or reforming the English stage had disappeared. In the early Elizabethan years appeared a succession of tragedies, mostly performed by the Inns of Court, and therefore not popular productions, which might in favourable circumstances have led to a living

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Senecan drama. Notably, *Gorboduc* (mentioned by Sidney above), *Jocasta*, and *Gismond of Salerne* (three of the four plays contained in Cunliffe's *Early English Classical Tragedies*). When *The Spanish Tragedy* appeared (with, as I have suggested, its particularly non-classical element) these feeble lights were snuffed out. I pass on to the finished Senecal product, because I am only concerned to elicit the effect of Seneca upon his sedulous admirers and imitators who professed to be, and were, men of taste and culture.

The Monarchic Tragedies of Alexander, Earl of Stirling, are the last on our list, composed under the auspices of the scholarly King James I. They are poor stuff: I imagine that they are more important in the history of the Union than in the history of the Drama, since they represent the choice, by a Scotsman of accidental eminence, to write verse in English instead of in Scots. Their faults are the faults of the other plays of the group; but they have not the virtues of the others. The two plays of Fulke Greville, Lord Brooke, the friend and biographer of Sidney, have some magnificent passages, especially in the choruses; Greville had a true gift for sententious declamation. But they have much dullness also; and they do not imitate Seneca nearly so faithfully as either those of Alexander or those of Daniel. Greville not only cannot stick to one chorus, but will introduce, on one occasion, a chorus of 'Bashas or Caddies,' and after the next act, a chorus of 'Mahometan Priests'; he introduces the still more doubtful practice of supernatural figures, a 'dialogue 'of Good and Evil Spirits,' or even a chorus of two alle-

gorical figures, 'Time and Eternity' (ending indeed with the fine line spoken by Eternity: *I am the measure of felicity*). The best, the best sustained, the most poetic and the most lyrical, are two tragedies of Samuel Daniel: *Cleopatra* and *Philotas*. They contain many lovely passages, they are readable all through, and they are well built.

Now, in comparison with the supposed influence of Seneca on the barbarity of Elizabethan tragedy, and his supposed bad influence upon the language, what do we find in the plays of those who took him as their model in their attack upon the popular stage, in that attack in which Daniel, in his dedication of *Cleopatra* to the Countess of Pembroke, declared himself the foe of 'Gross Bar-'barism'? Deaths there are, of course, but there is none of these tragedies that is not far more restrained, far more discreet and sober, not only than the Tragedy of Blood, but than Seneca himself. Characters die so decently, so remote from the stage, and the report of their deaths is wrapped up in such long speeches by messengers stuffed with so many moral maxims, that we may read on unaware that any one concerned in the play has died at all. Where the popular playwrights travestied Seneca's melodrama and his fury, the Senecals travesty his reserve and his decorum. And as for the language, that, too, is a different interpretation of Seneca. How vague are our notions of bombast and rhetoric when they must include styles and vocabularies so different as those of Kyd and Daniel! It is by opposite excesses that Senecals and popular dramatists attract the same reproach. The language of Daniel

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is pure and restrained; the vocabulary choice, the expression clear; there is nothing far-fetched, conceited, or perverse.

> CLEOPATRA. What, hath my face yet power to win a Lover?
> Can this torne remnant serve to grace me so,
> That it can Caesar's secret plots discover
> What he intends with me and mine to do?
> Why then, poor beauty, thou hast done thy last,
> And best good service thou could'st do unto me;
> For now the time of death reveal'd thou hast,
> Which in my life did'st serve but to undo me.

The first two lines are admirable; the rest are good serviceable lines; almost any passage from *Cleopatra* is as good, and some are far better. The whole thing is in excellent taste. Yet we may ponder the fact that it would not have made the slightest difference, to the formation of our Augustan poetry, if Daniel and his friends had never written a line; that Dryden and Pope are nearer allied to—Cowley; and that they owe more to Marlowe than to the purest taste of the sixteenth century. Daniel and Greville are good poets, and there is something to be learned from them; but they, and Sir John Davies who somewhat resembles them, had no influence. The only one of Lady Pembroke's heroes who endures is Edmund Spenser.

Within our limits it is impossible to do more than touch on the influence of Seneca upon the 'thought' of the Elizabethans, or more exactly, upon their attitude toward life so far as it can be formulated in words. I would only

say enough, at this point, to remind the reader that Seneca's influence upon dramatic form, upon versification and language, upon sensibility, and upon thought, must in the end be all estimated together; they cannot be divided. How the influence of Seneca is related, in the Elizabethan mind, with other influences, perhaps those of Montaigne and Machiavelli, I do not know; and I think it is a subject still to be investigated. But the frequency with which a quotation from Seneca, or a thought or figure ultimately derived from Seneca, is employed in Elizabethan plays whenever a moral reflection is required, is too remarkable to be ignored; and when an Elizabethan hero or villain dies, he usually dies in the odour of Seneca. These facts are known to scholars; but if known, they are usually ignored by literary critics. In a comparison of Shakespeare with Dante, for instance, it is assumed that Dante leant upon a system of philosophy which he accepted whole, whereas Shakespeare created his own: or that Shakespeare had acquired some extra- or ultra-intellectual knowledge superior to a philosophy. This occult kind of information is sometimes called 'spiritual knowledge' or 'insight.' Shakespeare and Dante were both merely poets (and Shakespeare a dramatist as well); our estimate of the intellectual material they absorbed does not affect our estimate of their poetry, either absolutely or relatively to each other. But it must affect our vision of them and the use we make of them, the fact that Dante, for instance, had behind him an Aquinas, and Shakespeare behind him a Seneca. Perhaps it was Shakespeare's special rôle in history to have effected this peculiar union

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—perhaps it is a part of his special eminence to have expressed an inferior philosophy in the greatest poetry. It is certainly one cause of the terror and awe with which he inspires us.

> 'Omnia certo tramite vadunt
> primusque dies dedit extremum.
> non illa deo vertisse licet
> quae nexa suis currunt causis.
> it cuique ratus prece non ulla
> mobilis ordo.
> multis ipsum timuisse nocet.
> multi ad fatum venere suum
> dum fata timent.'

Compare with *Edward III.*, Act IV., sc. iv. (see Cunliffe, *Influence of Seneca*, p. 87), and with *Measure for Measure*, Act III., sc. i. And

> 'Men must endure
> Their going hence, even as their coming hither:
> Ripeness is all.'

NOTE.—Mr. F. L. Lucas, in his *Seneca and Elizabethan Tragedy*, says (p. 122): 'But it must be said once for all about the bulk of Shakespeare's supposed borrowings from Seneca, that one grows more and more sceptical.' What has been said once for all is not for me to dispute, but I would point out that I am not here concerned with Shakespeare's 'borrowings' (where I am inclined to agree) but with Shakespeare as the voice of his time, and this voice in poetry is, in the most serious matters of life and death, most often the voice of Seneca. I subscribe to the observation of Cunliffe (*op. cit.* p. 85): 'We have (in *King Lear*) Seneca's hopeless fatalism, not only in the catastrophe, but repeatedly brought forward in the course of the play.'

> 'As flies to wanton boys are we to the gods;
> They kill us for their sport.'

III

The *Tenne Tragedies* were translated and printed separately over a space of about eight years, with the exception of the *Thebais*, which was translated by Newton in 1581 to complete the work for his edition of the whole. Copies of most of the first editions exist in the British Museum; the text which is here presented is that of the collected *Tenne Tragedies* produced by Newton. The order and dates of the several translations are of interest. The first and best of the translators was Jasper Heywood:[1] his *Troas* was printed in 1559, his *Thyestes* in 1560, his *Hercules Furens* in 1561. The *Œdipus* by Alexander Nevyle (translated 1560) was printed in 1563. In 1566 appeared the *Octavia* of Nuce, the *Agamemnon*, *Medea*, and *Hercules Œtaeus* of Studley in 1566, and the *Hippolytus* of Studley probably in 1567. About fourteen years then elapse before Newton produced his complete edition, and it may be presumed that he translated the *Thebais* for that purpose.[2]

It has never been supposed, in spite of the acid taunts of Nashe, that any of the Elizabethan dramatists owe any great debt to these translations.[3] Most of the playwrights, as I have intimated before, may be supposed to have had a smattering of Seneca at school; two of the popular

[1] Sometime Fellow of All Souls College, and later an eminent Jesuit; but chiefly remembered as the uncle of John Donne. Much information about Heywood and his family is contained in A. W. Reed's *Early Tudor Drama*.

[2] These facts are given succinctly in Cunliffe's *Influence of Seneca*. The slight textual differences between the early editions and that of 1581 are given by E. M. Spearing: *The Elizabethan Translations of Seneca's Tragedies*.

[3] See E. M. Spearing: *op. cit.*

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dramatists who exercised a decisive influence at an important moment—Kyd and Peele—were acquainted with several languages, and therefore themselves subjected to several influences. But if we look at the dates we cannot overlook the probability that these translations helped to direct the course of events. They (all but one) appeared between 1559 and 1566. The first plays of Senecan form which could be called popular were Sackville and Norton's *Gorboduc*, which appeared in 1561, Gascoyne's *Jocasta* in 1566, and *Gismond of Salerne* in 1567. We must also take account, of course, of the fact that plays of Seneca, and plays in imitation of Seneca, were being produced in Latin at the Universities.[1] The *Troades* was performed in Latin at Trinity College, Cambridge, in 1551. Trinity resumed its enterprise in 1559—the year of Heywood's *Troas*—and between 1559 and 1561 the College produced in Latin four plays of Seneca. And during the 'sixties the two Universities first, and the Inns of Court subsequently, composed and performed a number of Latin plays on the Senecan model. This would have occurred, no doubt, even had Heywood never translated Seneca at all. But there can be little doubt that his translations indicate a nascent interest in a new vernacular drama to vie with classical drama, and that they in turn stimulated the beginning of this drama. At the same busy moment took place another event of capital importance, which combined with this Senecan work to produce English tragedy. In 1557 came the publi-

[1] For a convenient summary of the Senecan movement throughout Europe, and particularly in England, see Kastner and Charlton's edition of Alexander, above mentioned.

cation of Surrey's translation of Book II. of the *Æneid*, in the new 'blank verse,' the instrument without which the Elizabethan drama would have been impossible. The firstfruits, *Gorboduc*, are inconsiderable; but this play marks a new epoch; there is no clearer division in the whole of English literature.

We have, in fact, within a period of about forty years, three distinct phases in the development of English tragedy: the first, from 1559 to some time in the early 'eighties, is announced by our translations of Heywood's; the second is the period in which flourished Kyd and Peele, both of whom came to be influenced by the sudden and soon extinguished genius of Marlowe; the third is the period of Shakespeare up to his culminating tragedies. Then follows a period of Jacobean drama which belongs not so much to Shakespeare, although Shakespeare's last plays fall within the first years of it, as to Beaumont and Fletcher: it is the period, not typically of tragedy, but of tragi-comic romance.

In the preceding section I insisted upon the difference between Seneca's influence upon popular drama and his influence upon those fastidious spirits, the Senecals, who tried to observe his dramatic laws. But this difference of tendency is hardly apparent in the first period, or until the appearance of Kyd and Peele. During this period the fashions set at the Universities were followed at the Inns of Court. The plays produced by the legal wits were sometimes acted at the Queen's Court, with which, indeed, the Inns had a kind of formal connection. And in turn the plays produced at the Royal Court affected the more

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popular drama.[1] *Gorboduc* is followed by *Gismond of Salerne*, and *Gismond* later by the popular and atrocious *Locrine* (in which Peele almost certainly had at least a heavy hand); *The Misfortunes of Arthur* was probably too tardy to play much part in the transition. Another play of importance, which shows the persistence of the influence from the Universities upon popular drama, is Legge's *Richardus Tertius*, a Latin chronicle play acted at St. John's College, Cambridge, in 1573, and apparently repeated in 1579 and 1582. This play is the parent of *The True Tragedy of Richard III.*, and consequently of the entire brood of chronicle plays.

Another point which I have already considered, but which must be mentioned here in a different context, is the relation of Seneca to *Italian* Seneca, and of both to the native tendencies of the time. Italian Seneca is not conspicuous until the period of Kyd and Peele; but even among the translations of Heywood we can find evidence that he was to be by no means unwelcome. Besides other peculiarities of these translations which we must examine, there is an interesting addition made by Heywood to the *Troas*. In the play of Seneca Achilles' Ghost makes no appearance; it is merely mentioned as having been seen. The play was the first to be translated, and there is some reason for believing that the translation was intended to be played. The 'divers and sundrye' additions which Heywood invents render this supposition all the more plausible; for they are such as a translator would be much

[1] See J. M. Manly's introduction (p. v.) to F. S. Miller's translation of *The Tragedies of Seneca* (1907).

more likely to make if he had a performance in view, than if his translation were intended only for reading; in the latter event he might be expected to stick pretty closely to the text. Between the second and third acts of the *Troas* Heywood allows himself the liberty of interpolating a new scene of his own invention, which is a long soliloquy in thirteen stanzas by the Ghost of Achilles. And this independent 'Sprite' rants in a tone which hardly Peele could outdo:

> 'From burning lakes the furies wrath I threate,
> And fire that nought but streames of bloud may slake
> The rage of wind and seas their shippes shall beate,
> And Ditis deepe on you shall vengeance take,
> The sprites crye out, the earth and seas do quake,
> The poole of Styx ungratefull Greekes it seath,
> With slaughtred bloud revenge Achilles death.'

It is to be observed that Nevyle and Studley both joined Inns of Court; that Nevyle came there to know Gascoyne, the author of *Jocasta*; and that Heywood knew, or at least knew of, Sackville and Norton before they had written *Gorboduc*. The impulse toward the Tragedy of Blood is already present in these translators, and they do not hesitate to add or to alter; the distortion of Seneca begins with his translation.

It is not only as an embryonic form of Elizabethan tragedy that these translations have documentary interest. They represent the transformation of the older form of versification into the new—consequently the transformation of language and sensibility as well. Few things that can happen to a nation are more important than the invention

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of a new form of verse. And at no other time, and to no other country than England at that time, has such an achievement as that of Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey, had greater consequences. To the French or to the Italians it could not have mattered so much. Their sensibility had already learned to express itself in large part in prose: Boccaccio and Machiavelli in one country, and the chroniclers—Froissart, Joinville, Commines—in the other, had already done a great work in forming the local mind. But the Elizabethan mind, far more than the contemporary mind in any other country, grew and matured through its verse rather than through its prose. The development of prose between Elyot and Bacon is certainly remarkable; but a comparison of styles between, say, Latimer and Andrewes shows a slower rate of change than the same space of time in verse, or the same space of time in prose in the next century. On the other hand, a study of the styles, the syntax, and the cadences of blank verse from *Gorboduc* to Shakespeare, and even after Shakespeare in the work of Webster and Tourneur, brings to light a process which is wholly astonishing.

The *Tenne Tragedies* must have shown conclusively to the most sensitive contemporary ears that the fourteener had had its day; it was certain that the verse of Surrey's *Æneid* was in every way the verse in which to render the dignity and pomposity of the Senecan rhythm. And the slower iambic pentameter brought with it an alteration in vocabulary. The fourteener had served very well in rough comedy; it runs jollily in *Roister Doister* and *Gammer Gurton*. It is no vehicle for solemn tragedy, and

the miracle is that Heywood and Studley made as good a job with it as they did. The fourteener, and the kindred loose metres of the interlude, are not adapted to a highly Latinised vocabulary; they are adapted to a vocabulary containing a large proportion of short words and monosyllables of Germanic origin; a vocabulary which must have come to seem, as it seems to us, *naif* and 'countrified,' if fresh and vigorous. The language of early Tudor times is indeed in some ways a deterioration from the language of Chaucer. One reason for this is no doubt the change in pronunciation, the suppression of syllables; the melody of the older tongue had gone, and with this melody much of its dignity; new rhythms, and new infusions from abroad, were very much needed. At first, in fact, the innovations overpowered the language; the Elizabethan bombast was a verbal even more than an emotional debauch; it was not until the prose of Dryden and Hobbes that English settled down to something like sobriety.

In the *Iliad* of Chapman we see new wine bursting old bottles; the poem is a magnificent *tour de force* in which Chapman sometimes succeeds in fitting the new vocabulary to the old 'stretched' metre. But it is, consequently, a poem of brilliant passages rather than sustained success. Heywood and Studley—particularly Studley—make no such attempt: their fourteener is early, not late Tudor; it is a different thing from Chapman's. Only in the pentameter rhymed choruses does their sensibility become more modern; the contrast between their dialogue and their chorus

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verse is most interesting. Here is a random bit of Studley:

> 'O *wanny* jaws of Blacke Averne, *eake* Tartar dungeon *grim*,
> O Lethes Lake of woful Soules the joy that therein swimme,
> And *eake* ye *glummy* Gulphes destroy, destroy me wicked wight
> And still in *pit of pangues* let me be plunged day and night.
> Now, now, come up ye Goblins grim from water *creekes* alow . . .'

The majority of the rhyme words are monosyllables. The most sonorous and canorous Latin names are truncated (it remained for Marlowe to discover, and Milton to perfect, the musical possibilities of classical names almost to the point of *incantation*). Alliteration, in as primitive a form as that of *Piers Plowman*, is constant. For instance, Heywood has

> 'shal Sisyphus his stone
> That slipper restles rollyng payse uppon my backe be borne,
> Or shall my lymmes with swifter swinge of whirling whele be torne?
> Or shal my paynes be Tytius panges th' encreasing liver still,
> Whose growing guttes the gnawing gripes and fylthy foules do fyll?'

To examine such lines under the microscope is not to do them justice; the vigorous vocabulary and swinging metre appear at their best when we read through a long descriptive or narrative passage: in the same play (the *Thyestes*) the messenger's account of the crime of Atreus (Act IV.) is admirably rendered.

In their handling of the choruses our translators are less scrupulous. When they translate the dialogue they are literal to the best of their ability—occasional inaccuracies or mistranslations being admitted—but in

the choruses they will sometimes lengthen or shorten, sometimes omit altogether, or substitute an invention of their own. On the whole, their alterations tend to make the play more dramatic ; sometimes they may be suspected of adding a political innuendo to the Senecan moralising on the vanity of place and power. And it is especially in the choruses that we find, now and then, flashes of that felicity which is present in Tudor translation more perhaps than in the translations of any period into any language. For example, the whole of the chorus at the end of Act IV. of Heywood's *Hercules Furens* is very fine, but the last six lines seem to me of singular beauty ; and as the original, too, is a lovely passage, it is both fair and interesting to quote both original and translation. The persons addressed are the dead children of Hercules, whom he has just slain in his madness.

> ' ite ad Stygios, umbrae, portus
> ite, innocues, quas in primo
> limine vitae scelus oppressit
> patriusque furor ;
> ite, iratos visite reges.'

And Heywood :

> ' Goe hurtles soules, whom mischiefe hath opprest
> Even in first porch of life but lately had,
> And fathers fury goe unhappy kind
> O litle children, by the way ful sad
> Of journey knowen.
> Goe see the angry kynges.'

Nothing can be said of such a translation except that it is perfect. It is a last echo of the earlier tongue, the

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language of Chaucer, with an overtone of that Christian piety and pity which disappears from Elizabethan verse. The greater part of the chorus work has not this purity: one feels a curious strain on the old vocabulary to say new things; the fluctuation, the shades of variation between the old world and the new deserve inquisitive study; the ambiguity probably contributes to give these translations a unique mood, which is only to be extracted and enjoyed after patient perusals. They are not translations to be read in a hurry; they do not yield their charm easily.

> 'Such friendship finde wyth Gods yet no man myght,
> That he the morowe might be sure to lyve.
> The God our things all tost and turned quight
> Rolles with a whyrle wynde.'

SENECA

HIS TENNE TRAGEDIES

TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH

Mercury nutrices horae

1581

To The Right Worshipful,

SIR THOMAS HENNEAGE KNIGHT,

Treasurer of Her Maiesties Chamber

Thomas Newton wisheth all abundaunce of Felicitie, and Spiritual benedictions in Christe.

OU may think Sir, some want of discretion in mee, for thus boldly presuminge to thrust into your handes these Tragedies of Seneca, From whych boldnesse, the very conscience of myne own unworthynes, might easely haue dissuaded mee, had not certayne learned Gentlemen of good credite and worship thereunto persuaded and animated mee. Assuring me [where of I thought my selfe afore assured] that your Worship [such is your loue to learning, and the generosity of your Heroicall mynde] would daygne not only to dispence with my temerity, but also take in worth my affectionate simplicity. And yet [all this notwithstandinge] well durst I not haue geuen the advēture to approch your presence,

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upon trust of any singularity, that in this Booke hath unskilfully dropped out of myne owne penne, but that I hoped the perfection of others artificiall workmāship, that haue trauayled herein aswell as my selfe should somewhat couer my nakednesse and purchase my pardon. And hard were the dealing, if in payment of a good round gubbe of Gold of full wayght and poyse, one poore peece somewhat clypped and lighter then his fellowes may not be foysted in amōg the rest, and passe in pay for currant coigne.

Theirs I know to be deliuered with singuler dexterity: myne, I confesse to be an unflidge nestling, unable to fly: an unnatural abortion, and an unperfect Embroyon: neyther throughlye laboured at Aristophanes and Cleanthes candle, neither yet exactly waighed in Critolaus his precise ballaūce. Yet this dare I saye, I haue deliuered myne Authors meaning with as much perspicuity, as so meane a Scholler, out of so meane a stoare, in so smal a time, and upon so short a warning was well able to performe. And whereas it is by some squeymish Areopagites surmyzed, that the readinge of these Tragedies, being enterlarded with many Phrases and sentēces, literally tending [at the first sight] sometime to the prayse of Ambition, sometyme to the mayntenaūce of cruelty, now and then to the

approbation of incontinencie, and here and there to the ratification of tyranny, cannot be digested without great daūger of infection; to omit all other reasons, if it might please thē with no forestalled judgmēt, to mark and consider the circumstaunces, why, where, and by what manner of persons such sentences are pronoūced, they cānot in any equity otherwise choose, but find good cause ynough to leade thē to a more fauourable and milde resolutiō. For it may not at any hād be thought and deemed the direct meaning of Seneca himselfe, whose whole wrytinges [penned with a peerelesse sublimity and loftinesse of Style,] are so farre from countenauncing vice, that I doubt whether there bee any amonge all the Catalogue of Heathen wryters, that with more grauity of Philosophicall sentences, more waightynes of sappy words, or greater authority of soūd matter beateth down sinne, loose lyfe, dissolute dealinge, and unbrydled sensuality: or that more sensibly, pithily, and bytingly layeth doune the guedon of filthy lust, cloaked dissimulation and odious treachery: which is the dryft, whereunto he leueleth the whole yssue of ech one of his Tragedies. Howsoeuer and whatsoeuer it be, your Worships curteous acceptaūce shal easily counterpoyse any of our imperfections. Unto whose learned Censure, wee humbly submit these

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the exercises of our blushing Muses. The Lord God in mercy long preserue you in health and dignity, with daily encrease of many his gracious gyfts, already rychly abounding in you: to the propagation, and aduauncement of his truth [whereof yee are a zealous Professor,] to the honoure of her Maiestye, to whom you are a most loyall seruitour, and to the generall benefite of your Countrey, whereof you are a rare and most worthy Ornament.

From Butley in Chesshyre the
24. of Aprill.
1581.

Your Worshippes most
humble,

THOMAS NEWTON.

THE FIRST TRAGEDIE OF SENECA

ENTITULED HERCULES FURENS

THE ARGUMENT OF THIS TRAGEDY

Juno the Wyfe and sister of Jupiter, hating his bastard broode, cometh downe from heaven, complayning of all his injuries done to her, devising also by what despight she may vexe his base Sonne Hercules. And having by experience proved, no toyles to be to hard for him, findeth the meanes to make his owne hand his owne vengeance. Hercules therefore returning now from Hell (from whence he was enjoyned to set Cerberus) and finding that the Tyrant Lycus had invaded his countrey, destroieth the tyrant. For the which victory as hee sacrificeth to his Goddesse, wrathfull Juno strikes him into a sodayne frensy: Wherewith he beinge sore vexed, thynking to flea the Children and Wyfe of Lycus, in steede of them, killeth his owne Wyfe and Children in his madnes. This done hee sleapeth. Juno restoreth to him agayne his Wits. He being wakt, seing his Wyfe and Children slayne by his owne hand, at last also would kill himselfe.

THE SPEAKERS

Juno.
Chorus.
Megara.
Amphitrion.
Lycus.
Hercules.
Theseus.

THE FIRST ACTE

JUNO alone

SYSTER of the Thunderer, (for now that name alone
Remaynes to me) Jove evermore as though devorst and gone,
And temples of the highest ayre as wydowe shunned have,
And beaten out of skyes above the place to Harlots gave.
I must go dwell beneath on ground, for Whoores do hold the sky,
From hence the Beare in parte above of ycy poale full hy,
A haughty starre the greekish shyps by Seas doth guyde about :
From this way, whence at spring time warme the day is loased out,
Europaes bearer through the waves of Tyria shynes full bright.
From thence, their stormy fearefull flocke to Ships, and seas affright,
The wandring daughters here and there of Atlas upward sway.
With staring bush of hayre from hens Orion Gods doth fray :
And Perseus eke his glitteryng starres of golden glosse hath here.
From hence the twynnes of Tyndars stocke do shine, a signe full clere :
And at whose byrth first stode the grounde that erst went to and fro.
Nor onely Bacchus now himselfe, or Bacchus mother Io,
Have clymd to Gods : least any parte should from rebuke be free,
The skies the Gnossian strumpets crownes do beare in spight of mee,
But I of old contemptes complayne : me, one dire, fierce, and shrewde,
Thebana land with wicked broode of Joves base daughters strewde,
How oft hath it a stepdame made ? though up to heaven should ryse,
The conqueryng drabbe Alcmena now, and hold my place in skyes,

THE FIRST TRAGEDY

And eke her sonne to promisd starres obtayne the worthy way,
At byrth of whom the staying worlde so long deferd the day,
And Phœbus slow frome morning sea began to glister bright,
Commaunded long in th' Ocean waves to hyde his drowned lyght
Yet shall my hates not leave them so, a wrathful kindled rage
His mynd in madnes shall stirre up, and yre that may not swage
Shall evermore (all peace layd downe) wage warres eternally.
What warres ? what ever hideous thinge the earth his ennemy
Begets, or what soever sea or ayre hath brought to syght
Both dredfull, dire, and pestilent, of cruel fiercest might,
'Tis tierd and tam'd : he passeth all, and name by ills doth rayse
And all my wrath he doth injoy and to his greater prayse
He turnes my hates : whyle tedious toyles to much I him behest,
He proves what father him begot : both thence where light opprest
Hath sea, and where it showde agayne, where Titan day doth trayne,
And with his brand approaching nere doth dye those Aethiops twaine,
His strength untamde is honoured : and God eche where is hee
Now calde : in worlde, and now more store of monsters want to mee,
And laboure lesse to Hercles is t'acomplish all my will,
Then me to bydde : at ease he doth myne imperies fulfyl.
What cruel bestes of tyrante now so fyerce a yong man may
Prevayle to hurt ? for lo he beares for weapons now awaye
What once he fearde, and put to flight : he armed comes at syde
With Lyon fyerce and Hydra both : nor land suffiseth wyde,
But broake he hath the threshold loe of that infernall Jove,
And spoyls with him of conquerd king he drawes to Gods above.
But thats but light, broke is the league of sprites that there do dwell
I saw my selfe, I saw him lo (the night now gone, of hell
And Ditis tamde) throw out abroade before his fathers sight
His brothers spoyles. Why drawes he not opprest and bound by might
Hymselfe in chaynes that equall thynges to Jove by lot doth hold ?
And beare the rule of captive hel, and way to Styxe unfolde ?
Up opened is from lowest ghostes the backward way to skye,
And sacred secrets of dire death in open sight do lye.
But he (the dredful den of sprites brake up ful fierce and stout
Even over mee doth tryumph lo, and with proude hand about

The foule blacke dogge by Grekish townes he leades from hel away. THE FIRST
When seene was ugly Cerberus I saw the fading day, ACTE
And fearefull sunne : even me lykewyse a trembling dread opprest,
And looking on the fylthy neckes of conquerd monstruous beast,
I feared much myne owne behestes : but light things I complayne
For heaven I may be frayde, lest he may get the highest rayne,
That lowest wonne, the sceptors from his father wil he take,
Nor hee to starres (as Bacchus dyd) his way wil gently make :
The way with ruine will he seeke, and hee in empty skyes
Wil reygne alone with force displayd hys haughty hart doth ryse,
And he that heaven it selfe by force of his might gotted bee,
It bearyng learnd : quite underneth the world his head set hee.
Nor once his shoulders bowde the prayse of such a mighty mas :
And midst of heaven on Hercles necke alone (loe) setled was.
His necke unwryde the starres above and skyes did only stay :
And me likewyse oppressyng him, to Gods he seekes the way.
Goe ire, goe on, and beate hym downe that great things doth invent
Match thou with him, and with thy handes now thou thy selfe him rent.
Such hates why dost thou meditate ? let all wyld beastes now go :
And weary Euristheus now be free from greving charges mo.
The Tytans daryng once of Jove to breake the impery
Send out : let loase the denne abroade of mount of Sicilye.
The Doricke land that with the turne of gyant quakes afrayd,
Let it bring forth the dredful neckes of monster under layd.
Let yet the haughty moone above some other beastes beget,
But these he overcame. Seekes thou a match t'Alcides yet ?
Thers none, except hymselfe : let him agaynst himselfe rebell.
Let present be from bottome deepe upraysd of lowest hell
Th' Eumenides, let flaming lockes of theyrs the fires out flinge,
And furious hands bestowe aboute the stroakes of vipers fling.
Go now ful prowde, and scale the skyes to seates of gods make waye.
Now must thy battels wages be ful cleere loe shynes the daye.
Despyse mans workes thinkst thou fierce wight that hell and soules alow
Thou hast escapt ? nay here I will another hel thee show.
In deepe miste hid I wil call up from bottome low of hell
Beyond the wayes of gylty ghostes debateful goddesse fell.

THE FIRST TRAGEDY

Wheras the roaring dreadful den resoundes with cryes about,
From depest bond of Ditis raygne beneath I wil set out,
What so is left. Let hateful hurt now come in anger wood,
And fierce impyety imbrew himselfe with his owne bloud,
And errour eke, and fury arm'd agaynst it selfe to fight.
This meane, this meane, let wrath of myne now use to shewe my might.
Beginne ye servantes now of hell: the fervent burning tree
Of Pyne shake up: and set with snakes her dreadful flocke to see.
Let now Megæra bring to sight, and with her mournful hand
For burning rage bring out of hell a huge and direful brand.
Do this, require you vengeance due, and paynes of hel his spoyle,
Strike through his breast, let fyercer flame, within his bosome boyle.
Then which in Aetna fornace beates, so furiously to see.
That mad of mind and witles may Alcides driven bee
With fury great through pearced quight, my selfe must first of all
Be mad. Wherfore doth Juno yet not into raging fall?
Mee, me, ye Furyes, systers three throwne quite out of my wit
Tosse fyrst, if any thing to do, I do endevour yet
For stepdame meete: let now my hates be turnd another way,
Let him (returnd) his babes behold in safety I you pray.
And strong of hand come home, I have now found the day at length,
In which may greatly mee avayle the hated Hercles strength.
Both mee and eke hym selfe let him subdue and wish to die
Returnd from hel, yea let it here be my commodity,
That he of Jove begotten is: here present wil I stand,
And that his shaftes goe streyght from bow, I wil direct his hand,
The mad mans weapons will I guide, even Hercles fyghtyng, lo,
At length Ile ayde. This gylt once done then leefull is that so
His father may admit to skies those gylty handes of his.

CHORUS

The fading starres now shyne but seelde in sighte
In stipye skye, night overcome with day
Plucks in her fyres, while spronge agayne is light.
The day starre drawes the cleresome beames theire waye,

The ycye signe of haughtye poale agayne,
With seven starres markt, the Beares of Arcadye,
Do call the light with overturned wayne.
With marble horse now drawne, hys waye to hye
Doth Titan toppe of Oetha over spred
The bushes bright that nowe with berryes bee
Of Thebes strewde, by daye do blushe full redde.
And to returne doth Phœbus syster flee.
Now labor harde beginnes, and everye kynde
Of cares it styrres, the Shepehearde doth unfolde :
His flockes unpende, do grase their foode to fynde,
And nippes the grasse with hoary frost full colde.
At will doth play in open medow faire
The Calfe whose brow did damme yet never teare,
The empty Kyne their udders doe repayre.
And lyght with course uncertayne here and there,
In grasse full soft the wanton kidde hee flynges.
In toppe of boughe doth sitte with chaunting songe,
And to the Sunne newe rose to spreade her wynges,
Bestirres herselfe her mourneful nestes amonge
The Nightingall : and doth with byrdes aboute
Confuse resound with murmure mixed ryse
To witnes day, his sayles to wynde set out
The shypman doth committe in doubt of lyfe,
Whyle gale of wynde the slacke sayles filles full strayte
He leaning over hollow rocke doth lye,
And either his begiled hookes doth bayte,
Or els beholdes and feeles the pray from hye with paised hand
The trembling fish he feeles with line extent.
This hope to them to whom of hurtles lyfe,
Is quiet rest, and with his owne content,
And lytle, house, such hope in fieldes is ryfe
The troblous hopes with rolling whirlewynd great
And dredful feares their wayes in cityes keepe.
He proude repayre to prince in regall seate,
And hard court gates without the rest of sleepe
Esteemes, and endless happynes to hold
Doth gather goods, for treasure gaping more,

And is ful pore amid his heaped gold.
The peoples favour him (astonied sore)
And commons more unconstant then the sea,
With blast of vayne renoume liftes up full proude.
He selling at the brawling barre his plea,
Full wicked, sets his yres and scoulding loud
And woordes to sale, a fewe hath knowne of all
The careles rest, who mindfull how doth flitte
Swift age away, the tyme that never shall
Returne agayne do holde : while fates permitte,
At quiet live : the lyfe full quickly glydes
With hastned course, and with the winged day
The wheele is turnde of yere that hedlong slides,
The sisters hard perfourme their taskes alway,
Nor may agayne untwist the threede once sponne
Yet mankind loe unsure what way to take
To meete the greedy destenyes do thronne
And willingly wee seke the Stigian lake.
To much Alcides thou with stomacke stoute
The sory sprites of hell dost hast to see.
With course prefixt the fates are brought aboute
To none once warnd to come may respite bee
To none to passe their once appointed day,
The tombe all people calde by death doth hyde
Let glory him by many landes awaye
Display, and fame throughout all cityes wyde
Full babling praise, and even with skye to stande
Avaunce and starres : let him in chariot bright
Ful haughty goe : let me my native land
In safe and secrete house keepe close from sight
To restful men hoare age by course doth fall,
And low in place, yet safe and sure doth lye,
The poore and base estate of cottage small :
The prowder pompe of minde doth fall from hye
But sad here comes with losed lockes of heare
Loe Megara with litle company,
And slowe by age drawes Hercles father neare

THE SECOND ACTE

MEGARA

GUIDER great of heaven, and of the world O Judge full hie,
Yet now at length apoinct a meane of carefull miserie,
And ende of our calamitie. To mee yet never day
Hath careles shin'de : the ende of one affliction past away
Beginning of an other is : an other ennemy
Is forthwith founde, before that hee his joyfull family
Retourne unto : an other syght hee taketh by behest :
Nor any respite given is to him nor quiet rest :
But whyle that he commaunded is : straight him pursueth shee
The hatefull Juno. Was yet once from toyle and labour free
His infants age ? the monsters (lo) he vanquisht hath and slayne,
Before he knew what monsters ment. The skaled serpents twayne
Their double neckes drew on toward him, agaynst the which to ryse,
The infant crept to meete with them, the serpents glittring eyes
Lyke fyre, with quiet carelesse brest he looking fast upon,
With countnance cleere, hard wrested knots of them he caught anon :
And strangling then the swelling throates of them with tender hand,
To Hydra prelude made, the beast so swyfte of Mænale land,
That with much Golde bare up full bright his beautified head,
Is caught in course, of Nemey wood likewise the greatest dread
The Lyon prest with Hercles armes hath roarde with dreadfull crie.
What should I speake of stables dyre, of steedes of Bystonye ?
Or King cast out himselfe for foode his horses fierce to fill ?
And bristled beast in thicke tops woont of Erymanthus hill ?

THE FIRST TRAGEDY

The boare of Mænalye, the woods of Arcady to shake ?
And Bull that did no litle dread to hundred peoples make ?
Among the flocks of Hesper lande that hence farre distant bee,
The sheepherde of Cartesian coast of triple shape to see
Is slayne, and driven is the pray from farthest parte of weast,
Citheton quak't when by him past to sea the well knowne beast.
He being bid to make by coastes of sommer sunne his way,
And parched landes which sore with heate doth boyle the middell day,
The mountaynes brake on either side and rampiers all undoon,
Even unto swyft and raging sea hath made a way to roon.
Then entring in of plenteous wood, the pleasant gardeins gay,
The waking dragons golden spoyles with him he brought away.
The Lerna monsters numerous ill what neede to tell have I ?
Hath he not him with fyre at length subdewde, and taught to dye ?
And which were woont with wings abrode to hyde the day from sight,
Even from the cloudes he sought and drave the Stimphale birdes to flight.
Not him subdewde who ever lyes in bed unmatcht at night
The widdowe queene of them that tooke to Thermodont their flight.
Nor handes that well durst enterprise his noble travayles all
The filthy labour made to shrynke of foule Augias hall.
What vayle all these ? he wants the world which oft defended he.
And th' earth well knowes the worker of his quietnes to be
Away from earth : the prosperous gilt that beareth happy sway,
Is vertue callde, and now the good to wicked doe obay.
The right doth stand in might of armes, feare treadeth downe the lawe.
Before my face with cruell hand, even presently I sawe
Revengers of theyr fathers reygne, the sonnes with sworde downe cast,
And of the noble Cadmus eke himselfe the offspring last
Then slayne : I sawe his regall crowne at once from him away
With head bereft. Who Thebes alas enough bewayle nowe may ?
The fertile land of Gods, what lorde now quakes it for to knowe ?
Out of the fieldes of which somtime, and fruictfull bosome lowe,
The youth upsprong with sworde in hand preparde to battell stoode :
And walls of which Amphion one of mighty Jove his broode,

Hath built with sounding melody in drawing to the stones :
To towne of whom the parent chiefe of Gods not onely ones
Heaven being left hath come, this land that Gods above alway
Receiv'de, and which hath made them Gods, and (leefull beete to say)
Perhaps shall make, with lothsome yoake of bondage is prest downe.
O Cadmus stocke, and citezens of olde Amphions towne,
Whereto are yee nowe fall'ne ? dread yee a cowardly exull thus,
His coastes to dwell in, lacking, and to ours injurious ?
Who through the worlde pursues the gilts and wrong by sea and land,
And cruell sceptors broken hath with just and ryghtfull hand,
Nowe absent serves, and what he eal'de in other doth sustayne :
And now doth bannysht Lycus holde of Hercles Thebes the rayne.
Yet shall he not : he shall come home, and him with vengeaunce quight,
And sodaine rise to starres : he will soone finde the way to light,
Or make it ells, returne thou safe, repayre to thine in haste :
And conquerour to conquer'de house yet come agayne at laste
Ryse up my spouse, and darknes deepe repell'de of helly shade
Breake up with hand, if no way may for thee kept backe bee made,
And passage be shut up, returne with world uprent by might.
And what soever li'the possest byneath in darkest night,
Send out with thee, as when the tops of haughty hylles undoon
A headlong passage making through for hasty floude to roon
Thou somtime stoodst, what with great might of thyne a sunder broake
The Tempye woods wyde open lay : and beaten with thy stroake
The mount, now here, now there fell downe : and rampier rente of stay,
The raging brooke of Thessaly did roon a newe found way.
Thy parentes so, thy sonnes, thy land repayring home to see,
Breake out, and lowest bonde of things out bringing thence with thee,
And what soever greedy age in all these long yeares race
Hath hid, shew forth, and ghosts that have forgot theyr former case,
And people up before thee drive that fearefull are of light.
Unworthy spoyles for thee they are, if thou but bring to sight

THE FIRST TRAGEDY

What hidden is, great thinges, but farre to much I speake for mee,
Unwotting of myne owne estate, when shall I hap to see,
The day when thee, and thy right hand, I may embrace agayne,
And slowe returnes, nor yet of me once myndefull, may complayne ?
To thee for this O guide of Gods, untamed Bulls shall bring
Their hundred necks : to thee O Queene of fruits on earth that spring
I'le geve thee secret sacrifice : to thee with much sayth loe
Long fyre brands at Eleusis towne full silent wyll I throe.
Then to my brethren shall I thinke to bee restoarde agayne
Theyr soules, and eke himselfe alive and guiding of his rayne
My father for to flouryshe yet, if any greater might
Doe keepe thee shet, we followe thee : with thy returne to sight
Defend us all, or els to hell drawe downe us all to thee.
Thou shalt us drawe, no God shall rayse us up that broken bee.

AMPHITRYON, MEGARA

O Faythfull fellowe of our bloud, with chaste true faythfulnes
The Bridebed keeping, and the sonne of haughty Hercules,
Conceive in mynde some better thinges, and take good heart to thee :
He will come home, as after all his labours woonteth hee,
Of more renowne. Me. What wretches doe most chiefly wishe of all,
They soone beleve. Am. Nay what they feare to much lest it may fall,
They thinke it never may bee shoon'de, nor rid by remedy.
Me. Beleefe is ready still to dreade the woorser mysery.
Deepe drown'de, and whellm'de, and farthermore with all the world full lowe :
Oppressed downe, what way hath he to light agayne to goe ?
Am. What way I pray you had he then when through the burning coste,
And tumbling after maner of the troubled Sea up toste
He went by sands : and freate that twyse with ebbe away doth slip,
And twyse upflowe : and when alone with his forsaken ship,

Fast caught he stucke in shallowe foordes of shelfye Syrtes sande, THE
And (nowe his ship on grounde) did passe through seas a foote to land ? SECOND ACTE

Me. Injurious fortune vertue most of men most stout and strong
Doth seldome spare : no man alyve himselfe in safety long
To perills great and daungers may so often times out cast,
Whom chaunce doth often overslip, the same it findes at last.
But cruell loe, and greevous threats even bearing in his face,
And such as he of stomacke is, doth come even such of pace,
Proude Lycus who the sceptors shakes in hande of other king,
The plentuous places of the towne of Thebes governing,
And every thinge about the whych with fertile soyle doth goe
Sloape Phocis, and what ever doth Ismenus overfloe,
What ever thing Cithæron seeth with haughty top and hye,
And slender Isthmos Ile, the which betweene two seas doth lye.

LYCUS, MEGARA, AMPHITRION

Not I of native countrey bowres possesse the auncient right
Unworthy heir, nor yet to me are noble men of might
The grandfathers, nor stocke renownd with titles hie of name,
But noble vertue : who so boastes of kinred whence he came,
Of others vertue makes his vaunt, but got with fearful hand
My sceptors are obtaynd : in sword doth all my safety stand.
What thee thou wotst agaynst the will of cytesyns to get,
The bright drawne sword must it defend : in forrayne countrey set
No stable kingdome is. But one my pompe and princely might
May ratify once joynd to me with regall torche ful bright,
And chambers Megara : of stocke of such nobility
Let upstart state of myne take shape. I do not thinke that shee
Refuse it will, or in the bed with mee despyse to lye.
But if with proude unbridled mynde shee stubburn do denye,
Then quite I purpose to destroy the house of Hercules
The hate of men will then my pryde, and peoples speach oppres.
Chiefe knacke of kingdome is to beare thy subjectes hates eche one
Lets prove her then, chaunce geven hath to us a place alone.
For shee her head in fold of vayle ful sad and wofully
Enwrapt the Gods that are her guides for succour standes fast by,

And at the syde of her doth leane Alcides father trewe.
Meg. What thing doth this destroyer of our stocke agayne anew
Prepare ? what proveth he ? Ly. O Queene that name renowmed hye
And tytle takste of regall stocke ful gentle and easily
A litle whyle receive and heare my wordes with pacient eare,
If alwayes men eternal hates should one to th' other beare,
And rage be gone out of the hart should never fall away,
But th' happy still should armour holde, th' unhappy stil obay,
Then shall the battayles nothing leave : with wide fieldes then the lande
Shall lie untild, with underlayd to housen fiery brand
Then ashes deepe shal overwhelme the buried people all.
Expedient is to conquerour to wish that peace befall :
To conquerd nedefull partner of the kingdome come to me :
Let 's joyne our myndes, take here this pledge of fayth and truth to thee.
My right hand touch. Why whishtest thou with cruell face and moode ?
Meg. Should I abyde, that I the hand sprinkt with my fathers bloud,
Should touch, and double death imbrewd of both my brethren ? nay
Fyrst shall sunne ryse extinguish quite, and West shal bring the day :
First faythful peace betweene the snowes and fiers there shalbe tryde,
And Scilla shall t'Ausonius fyrst joyne his Sicilian syde :
And fyrst, the fleetyng floud that with swift turnes of course doth flowe
Euripus with Euboik waur shall stand ful stil and slow.
My father, th' empire, bretherne, house, thou hast me cleare bereft,
My countrey to : what may be more ? one thing to me is left,
Then brother, father, kingdome, house, that dearer is to mee
The hate of thee, the which to me with people for to be
In commune woe I am : how great is myne alonly part ?
Rule on ful proude, beare up ful hye thy sprites and haughty hart :
Yet God the proude behynd theyr backes doth follow them to wreake.
I know the Thebane kingdomes : what should I the mothers speake,

Both suffring, and adventring gyltes? what double mischiefe done?
And mixed name of spouse at once, of father and of sonne?
What brether as double tentes? or what as many roages also?
The mother proude of Tantals brood congeald in mourning loe,
And sory stone yet flowes with teares in Phrygian Sipylye.
Himselfe likewyse erected up his scaled heade awrye.
Even Cadmus measuring throughout th' Illyrian lands in flight,
Behynd him left of body drawne long slymy markes in sight.
All these examples wayte for thee: rule thou as likes thy will,
Whyle thee our kingdomes wonted fates do call and oft hap yll.
Ly. Goe to, these fierce and furious wordes thou woman mad refraine,
And imperyes of princes learne of Hercles to sustayne.
Though I the scepters gotten by the force of war do beare,
In conquering hand and all do rule without the law his feare.
Which armes subdue, a few wordes yet to thee now speake I shall
For this my cause thy father did in bloudy battel fall:
Thy brethren fell, the weapons kepe no measurable stay.
For neither easily tempred be, nor yet repressed may
The drawne swordes yre, the battels doth the bloud delite out shedde.
But he yet for his kingdome fought, wee altogether led
With wicked lust: yet th' end of war is now complayned, loe,
And not the cause, but now let all remembraunce therof goe:
When conquerour hath weapons left, the conquerde part should be
To leave his hates. Not I that thou with lowly bended knee
Mee raygning worship should'st, require: even this doth mee delight,
That thou thy myseries do'st beare with mynde so stout upright.
Thou for a king a spouse art meete, let's joyne our beds anone.
Me. A trembling colde doth run throughout my bloudles lims ech one.
What hainous thinge comes to myne eares? I fear'de not then at all,
When (all peace broake) the noyse of warre did by the city wall
Resounde about, I bare all that unfearefully to see,
I feare the wedding chambers: nowe I captive seeme to mee.

Let heavy chaynes my body greeve, and eke with hunger long
Let lingring death be slowly brought, yet shall no force full strong
My truthe subdue : for even thine owne Alcides will I dye.
Ly. Doth then thy husband droun'de in hell geve thee this stomack hie ?
Me. The hells alowe he toucht, that he the height againe might get.
Ly. The heavy paise oppresseth him of all the earth full great.
Me. Hee with no burdein shall be prest, that heaven it selfe sustayn'de.
Ly. Thou shalt be forst. Me. He wots not how to die, that is constrain'd.
Ly. Speake, what may rather I prepare then wedding newe for thee
More royall gyft ? Me. Thine owne death els, or els the death of mee.
Ly. Thou shalt mad woman die. Me. I shall then to my husbande go.
Ly. More then my Sceptors is to thee a servaunt loved so ?
Me. How many hath this servant slayne of kings with handy stroake ?
Ly. Why doth he yet a king then serve, and still sustayne his yoake?
Me. Take once away the hard behests, what's vertue then at last ?
Ly. Do'st thou it vertue counte, to bee to beasts, and monsters cast ?
Me. T'is vertues part, to tame the things, that all men quake to know.
Ly. Him great things braggig, darknes deepe of tartare presse ful low.
Me. There never may from ground to stars an easy passage be.
Ly. Of whom begot, the housen then of Gods through pearceth he ?
Am. O wretched wife of Hercles great, thy words a whyle now spare.
My parte it is, the father of Alcides to declare,
And his true stocke, yet after all of man so stoute as this
So famous deedes, and after all appeas'de with hand of his
What ever Titan rysen up, doth see, or els at fall,
And after all these monsters tam'de, and Phlegrey sprinkled all
With wicked bloud, and after Gods defended all on hye,
Is not his father yet well knowne ? or Jove doe we beelye ?

Beleeve it yet by Junoes hate. Ly. Why do'ste thou sclaunder Jove ?
No mortall kinred ever may be mixt with heaven above.
Am. To many of the Gods in skyes is this a common trade.
Ly. But were they ever servauntes yet, before they Gods were made ?
Am. Of Delos Ile the sheepherde loe the flocks of Pherey fed.
Ly. But through all coasts he wandred not abroade as banished.
Am. Whom straying mother first brought forth in wandring land to sight.
Ly. Yet Phœbus did no monsters feare, or beasts of cruell might.
Am. First Dragon with his bloud embrew'd the shafts of Phœbus lo.
Howe greevous ills even yet full yong he bare, doe you not knoe ?
From mothers wombe the babe out thrown with lightning flame from hie,
Even next his lightning Father stoode forthwith above in skye.
What ? he him selfe that guides the starres, and shakes the clouds at will,
Did not that Infant lurke in Den of hollowe caved hill ?
The byrthes so great full troublous pryce to have loe alwayes ought :
And ever to be borne a God, with coste full great is bought.
Ly. Whom thou a miser see'st, thou mai'st know him a man to bee.
Am. A miser him deny yee may, whom stout of heart yee see.
Ly. Call we him stout, from shoulders hye of whom the Lyon throwne
A gift for mayden made, and eke his Club from hand fell downe,
And paynted side with purple weede did shyne that he did weare ?
Or may we him call stout of heart, whose staring lockes of heare
With ointment flowde ? who hands renownde and knowne by prayses hye
To found unmeete for any man of timber did applye,
With barbarous mytar cloasing in his forhead rounde about ?
Am. The tender Bacchus did not blushe abroade to have layde out
His brayded heares, nor yet with hand full soft the Thyrsus light
For to have shooke, what time that he with pace unstout in sight
His long train'de barbarous garment drew with golde full fayre to see.
Still vertue after many workes is woont releast to bee.

Ly. Of this the house of Euritus destroyde doth witnesse beare,
And virgins flockes that brutishly by him oppressed weare.
No Juno did commaunde him this, nor none Eurystheus loe.
But these in deede his owne workes are. Am. Yet all yee doe not knoe.
His worke it is, with weapons of his owne hand vanquished
Both Eryx, and to Eryx joyn'de Antæus Lybian ded :
And aulters which with slaughter of the straungers flowing fast,
Busyris well deserved bloud likewise have drunke at last.
His deede it is, that he that met the wounde, and sworde is slayne
Constrain'de to suffre death before those other Geryons twayne.
Nor one all onely Geryon doth with one hand conquer'de lye.
Thou shalt among these be which yet with none adulterye
Have wedlocke hurt. Ly. What is to Jove, to king is leefull thyng :
To Jove thou gav'ste a wyfe, thou shalt nowe geve one to a kyng.
And even of thee shee shall it learne to bee a thing not newe,
Her husband even approving it the better man t'ensewe.
But if shee stubberne to be matcht with me deny it still,
Then even by force a noble childe of her beget I will.
Me. O Creons ghosts and all yee Gods of th' house of Labdacus,
And wedding torches blasing bryght, of wicked Oedipus,
To this my wedding geve yee nowe our wonted destenyes.
Now, now yee bloudy daughters all of Ægypts king likewyse,
Bee here whose hands defyled are with so much bloud out spilt :
One daughter lacks of Danaus, I wyll fyll up the gylt.
Ly. Because that stubburnely thou do'st refuse my wedding so,
And fear'ste a king, thou shalt know what the Scepters now may do.
Embrace thyne aulters, yet no God shall ever take away
Thee from my hands : no not although with world upturned, may
Alcides victor yet agayne to Gods above returne.
The woods on heapes together cast, let all their temples burne
Even throwne upon theyr heads : his wyfe, and all his flocke at laste
With underlayed fyre, let one wood pyle consume and waste.
Am. This only bowne I father of Alcides aske of thee,
Which well may me beseeme to crave, that I fyrst slayne may bee.
Ly. Who all appoyncts with present death to have their punishment,
He tyrant wots not how to be : more sundry greeves invent.

Restrayne the wretched man from death, commaunde that th' happy dye.
I, while with beames prepar'de to burne the pyle encreaseth hye,
Will him with vowing sacrifyce that rules the seas entreate.
Am. Oh chiefest powre of Gods, and oh of heavenly things so great
The guyde, and parent eke, with whose throwne thunderbolts do shake
All things humane throughout the world of king so cruell slake
The wicked hande : but why do I to Gods in vayne thus cry ?
Where ever thou be, heare me soone, why start so sodaynely
The temples thus with mooving shakte ? Why roareth out the ground ?
The noyse of Hell from bottome deepe byneathe hath made a sound :
Wee herde are, loe it is the sound of Hercules his pace.

CHORUS

O Fortune hating men of stoutest brest,
How ill rewards dost thou to good devyde ?
Eurystheus raynes at home in easy rest,
Alcmenaes sonne in every battayle tryde,
To Monsters turnes hys hande that Skyes dyd stay :
And cruell Neckes cuts of, of hydous Snake,
And Apples brynges from Systers mokt away,
When once to sleepe hys watchefull Eyes beetake,
Dyd Dragon set ryche fruicte to oversee.
Hee past the Scythian bonres that straye abroade,
And those that in their countreys straungers bee
And hardned top of frosen freate hee troade,
And sylent Sea with bankes full dumme about.
The Waters hard want there their floudes to floe.
And where before the Shyps full Sayles spred out
Is worne a pathe for Sarmates wylde to goe.
The Sea doth stande to moove in course agayne,
Nowe apt to beare the Ship, nowe horsemen bolde

THE FIRST TRAGEDY

The Queene that there doth over Wydowes rayne,
That gyrds her Wombe wyth gyrth of glittring gold,
Her noble spoyle from body drawne hath shee
And shyelde, and bandes of breast as whyte as snowe,
Acknowledging the Conquerour with Knee.
Wyth what hope drawne to headlong Hell alowe,
So bolde to passe the unreturned wayes
Saw'ste thon Proserpines rayne of Sicylye?
Wyth Southern wynde, or Western there no seas
Aryse wyth wave and swellinge Surges hye.
Not there of Tyndars stocke the double broode
Two starres the fearefull Shyps doe ayde and guide,
Wyth gulph full blacke doth stande the slouthfull floode
And when pale death with greedy teeth so wyde,
Unnumbred Nations hath sent downe to sprightes
Wyth one Boateman all over feryed bee.
God graunt thou maist of Hell subdue the rightes
And unrevoked webs of Systers three.
There kyng of many people raygneth hee,
Who when thou did'st wyth Nestors Pylos fight,
Pestiferous handes appli'de to matche with thee
And weapon bare with triple mace of might:
And prickt with litle wounde he fled away,
And lorde of death hymselfe did feare to dye.
Breake Fate by force: and let the sight of day
To sorry sprightes of Hell apparant lye
And porche unpast shew way to Gods above.
The cruell lordes of sprightes wyth pleasaunt song
And humble bowne full well could Orpheus move,
Whyle he Eurydicen them craves among.
The Arte that drew Woods, Byrds, and stones at will:
Which made delay to Floudes of flitting flight
At sound whereof the savage Beastes stoode still
With tunes unwont doth Ghosts of hell delight
And clearer doth resounde in darker place:
And weepe wyth teares did Gods of cruell brest:
And they which faultes with to severe a face
Doe seeke, and former gylt of Ghosts out wrest:

The Thracian Daughters wayls Eurydicen.
For her the Judges weeping sit also.
Wee conquer'de are, chyefe kyng of death sayd then
To Gods (but under this condition) goe,
Behynde thy husbandes backe keepe thou thy way,
Looke thou not backe thy Wyfe before to see.
Than thee to sight of Gods hath brought the day
And gate of Spartane Tænare present bee.
Love hates delay, nor coulde abyde so long.
His gyft, hee lost, while hee desires the syght.
The place that coulde bee thus subdew'de with song
That place may soone bee overcome by myght.

THE THYRDE ACTE

HERCULES

COMFORTABLE guyde of light, and honour of the skye,
That compassing both Hemyspheres with flaming chariot hye
Thy radiant head to joyful lands about the world dost bring,
Thou Phœbus pardon geve to me, if any unlawful thing
Thyne eyes have seene : (commaunded) I have here to light
The secretes of the worlde : and thou of heaven o guider gret, (out set)
And parent eke, in flashe out throwne of lightning hide thy syght.
And thou that governest the seas with seconde sceptors myght,
To bottome synke of deepest waves : who so from hye doth see,
And dreading yet with countnaunce newe the earth defil'de to bee,
Let him from hence turne backe his sight, and face to heaven upholde,
These monstrous sights to shun : let twayn this mischiefe great behold,
Hee who it brought, and shee that bad, for paynefull toyles to mee,
And laboures long, not all the earth thought wide inough may bee
For Junoes hate : things uncome to all men I did see,
Unknowne to sonne, and spaces wyde that darke and shadefull bee
Which woorser poale geves dyrer Jove to raygne and rule therein.
And yet if thyrde place pleased more for mee to enter in,
I there coulde raygne, the Chaos of eternall nyght of hell,
And woorse then night, the dolefull Gods I have that there doe dwell,

And Fates subdu'de, the death contemn'de I am return'de to light.
What yet remaynes ? I sawe and show'de the spryghts of hell to sight :
Appoynct, if ought be more, do'ste thou my hands so long permit
Juno to ceasse ? what thing byd'st thou to be subdued yet ?
But why doe cruell souldiars holde the holy temples wyde ?
And dread of armour sacred porche beset on every syde ?

AMPHITRYON, HERCULES, THESEUS

Do eyther els my great desyres delude and mocke myne eyes ?
Or hath the tamer of the world and Greekes renowme likewyse,
Forsooke the silent howse, besette with cloude full sadde to see ?
Is this my sonne ? my members loe for joy amased bee.
Oh sonne, the sure and savegard late of Thebes in misery,
See I thy body true indeede ? or els deceiv'de am I
Mockt with thy sprite ? art thou the same ? these brawnes of armes I know
And shoulders, and thy noble handes from body hie that grow.
Her. Whens (father) happes this uglines, and why in mourning clad
Is thus my wyfe ? how happes it that with filth so foule bestad
My children are ? what misery doth thus my house oppresse ?
Am. Thy father in law is slayne : the kingdome Licus doth possesse.
Thy sonnes, thy parent and thy wyfe to death pursueth hee.
Her. Ungrateful land, doth no man come that will an ayder bee
Of Hercles house ? and this behelde so great and haynous wronge
Hath th'ayded world ? but why were I the day in playnt so long ?
Let then my dye and this renoume let strength obtayne in haste,
And of Alcides enmies all let Lycus be the last.
I driven am to goe to shedde the bloud of enmye out.
Watch Theseu that no sodayne strength beset us here aboute :
Me warres require, embracing yet deferre O father deare,
And wyfe deferre them : Lycus shall to hell this message beare

That I am now returnd. Th. Shake of O Queene out of thyne eyes
This weping face, and thou synce that thy sonne is safe likewyse
Thy dropping teares refrayne : yf yet I Hercles ever knew
Then Lycus shall for Creon paye the paynes to him ful due.
T'is lyght, he shal, he doth and that's to light he hath it done.
Am. Now God that can them bring to passe, spede wel our wishes soone,
And come to helpe our weary woes. O noble harted mate
Of my stout sonne, of his renowne declare us all the rate :
How long away doth leade to place where sory sprites doth dwell,
And how the hard and heavy bondes the dog hath borne of hell.
Th. The deedes thou dost constrayne to tell, that even to mynde secure
Are dredful yet and horrible, scant yet the trust is sure
Of vitall ayre, sore blunted is the sharpnesse of my sight,
And dulled eyes do scant sustayne to see th' unwoonted light.
Am. Yet Theseus throughly overcome what ever feare remaynes
In bosome deepe, nor do thou not of best fruict of thy paynes
Beguilde thy selfe. What thing hath once to suffre beene a care,
To have remembred it is sweete, those dredful haps declare.
Th. All ryght of worlde, and thee lykewise I praye that bearst the rayne
In kingdome wyde, and thee, for whom all round about in vayne
Thy mother throughout Ætna sought, that secret things alowe
And hid in ground, it freely may bee lawfull for to showe.
The Spartane land a noble toppe of hyll advaunceth hye,
Where Tænarus with woods full thick the Sea doth overly.
The house of hatefull Ditis here his mouth doth open set,
And rocke of hyll above doth gape, and with a denne full gret
A huge and gaping cleft of ground with Jawes full wyde doth lye,
And way full broade to people all doth spred to passe thereby.
Not straight with darkenes both begin the way that blindes the sight.
A litle lingring brightnes loe behinde of late left light,
And doubtfull glittring yet of sonne afflicted falles alowe,
And mocks the sight : such light is wont undoubtedly to showe

THE THIRD ACTE

The dawne of day, or twylight els at edge of evening tyde.
From hence to hollowe places voyde are loaste the spaces wyde,
To which needes peryshe must all kinde of men that once are throwne.
Nor it a labour is to goe, the way it selfe leades downe.
As oft the ships agaynst theyr willes doth tosse the swelling surge,
So downward doth that headlong way, and greedy Chaos urge:
And backe agayne to drawe thy pace thee never doe permit
The sprits who what they catch hold fast, alowe within doth flit
In chanell wyde with silent foorde the quiet lake of lethe,
And cares doth rid: and that there may to scape agayne from death
No meane be made, with many turnes and windings every way
Foldes in his floude, in such sorte as with wave unsure doth play
Mæander wandring up and downe, and yeldes himselfe unto,
And doubtfull stands, if he toward banke, or backe to spryng may goe.
The foule and filthy poole to see of slowe Cocytus lyes.
On th' one the Grype, on th' other side the mournefull Howlet cries,
And sad lucke of th' unhappy Strix likewise resoundeth there.
Full uglily in shady bowes blacke Locks of lothsome heare,
Where Taxus tree doth over leane, which holdeth slouthfull sleepe,
And hunger sad with famisht Jawe that lyes his place to keepe,
And shame to late doth hide his face that knowes what crimes it hath,
Both feare, and quaking, funerall, and fretting raging wrath,
And mourning dyre doth follow on, and trembling pale disease,
And boystrous battayles set with sworde: and hid beyond all thease
Doth slouthfull age his lingring pace help forth with staffe in hand.
Am. Of corne and wyne in hell alowe is any fertile land?
Th. No joyfull Meades do there bring forth with face so greene and fayre,
Nor yet with gentill Zephyrus wagges ripened corne in th' ayre.
Nor any tree hath there such bowes as doe bryng apples out.
The barrayne compasse of deepe soyle full filthy lyes about,
And withred with eternall drought the lothsome land doth waste
And bond full sad of thinges, and of the worlde the places laste:
The ayre unmoved stands, and night sits there full darke to see
In slouthfull world, all thinges by dread full horrible there bee.

And even farre worse then death it selfe, is place where death doth bide.
Am. What? he that doth those places darke with regall sceptor guide,
In what seate set, doth he dispose and rule those peoples light?
Th. A place there is in turne obscure of Tartarus from sight,
Which mist full thick with fearefull shade doth holde and overgoe.
From hence a double parted streame from one wellspring doth floe:
The tone, much like a standing poole (by this the gods doe sweare)
The which the sacred Stygian lake with silent floude doth beare:
The t'other fierce with tumult great is drawen his course to goe,
And Acheron with raging floud the stones dryves to and froe
Unsaylable, with double foorde is rounde about beset
Agaynst it Ditis pallace dyre, and mansion house full gret
In shadefull woode is covered: from wide den here the posts
And thresholds of the tyrant hang, this is the walke of ghosts:
This of his kingdome is the gate: a fielde about it goes,
Where sitting with a countnaunce proude abroade he doth dispose
Newe soules, a cruell majesty is in the God to knowe:
A frowning forehead, which yet of his brethren beares the showe,
And so great stocke: there is in him of Jove the very face,
But when he lightens: and great part of cruell kingdomes place,
Is he himselfe the lorde thereof: the sight of whom doth feare,
What ever thing is fear'de. Am. Is fame in this poynct true, that there
Such rygours are, and gilty Ghosts of men that there remayne
Forgetfull of theyr former faulte, have there deserved payne?
Who is the rector there of ryght, and judge of equity?
Th. Not onely one extorter out of faultes in seate set hye
The judgements late to trembling soules doth there by lot awarde:
In one appoyncted judgement place is Gnossian Minos harde,
And in an other Radamanthe: this crime doth Aeac heare.
What eche man once hath done, he feeles: and guilt to th' author theare
Returnes, and th' hurtfull with their owne example punisht bee.
The bloudy cruell captaynes I in pryson shet did see,
And backe of tyrant impotent even with his peoples hande
All torne and cut, what man of might with favour leades his lande,

And of his owne lyfe lorde reserves his hurtlesse handes to good,
And gently doth his empyre guide without the thyrst of blood,
And spares his soule, he having long led forth the lingring dayes
Of happy age, at length to heaven doth eyther finde the wayes,
Or joyfull happe places ells of fayre Elysius woode.
Thou then that here must be a judge abstayne from man his bloode,
Who so thou be that raygnest kyng : our gyltes are there acquit
In greater wyse. Am. Doth any place prescript of lymite shit
The gylty Ghosts, and as the fame reportes, doth cruell payne
The wicked men make tame that in eternall bondes remayne ?
Th. Ixion roll'de on whyrling wheele is tost and turned hye :
Upon the necke of Sisyphus the mighty stone doth lye.
Amyd the lake with thyrsty Jawes olde Tantalus therein
Pursues the waves, the water streame doth wet and washe his chin,
And when to him nowe ofte deceyv'de it doth yet promise make,
Straight flits the floud : the fruicte at mouth his famyne doth forsake.
Eternall foode to fleeing foule doth Tytius hart geve still :
And Danaus daughters doe in vayne theyr water vessels fill.
The wicked Cadmus daughters all goe raging every way :
And there doth greedy ravening byrde the Phiney tables fray.
Am. Nowe of my sonne declare to me the noble worthy sight.
Brings he his willing unckles gyft, or Plutoes spoyles to sight ?
Th. A dyre and dredfull stone there is the slouthfull foordes fast bye,
Where sluggish freat with wave aston'd full dull and slowe doth lye :
This lake a dredfull fellow keepes both of attire and sight,
And quaking Ghosts doth over beare an aged ugly wyght :
His Bearde unkempt, his bosome foule deform'de in filthy wyse
A knot byndes in, full lothesome stand in head his hollowe eyes :
He Feary man doth steare about his Boate with his long Ore.
He driving nowe his lightned Ship of burden towarde the Shore,
Repayres to waves : and then his way Alcides doth requyre,
The flocke of Ghosts all geving place : alowde cryes Charon dyre,
What way attemptest thou so bolde ? thy hastening pace here stay.
But Nathales Alcmenaes sonne abyding no delay,
Even with his owne poale bet he dothe full tame the shipman make,
And clymes the ship : the barke that coulde full many peoples take,

THE FIRST TRAGEDY

Did yelde to one : he sat, the boate more heavy like to breake
Whith shyvering joyntes on eyther syde the lethey floud doth leake.
Then tremble all the monsters huge, the Centaures fierce of myght,
And Lapithes, kindled with much wyne to warres and bloudy fight,
The lowest Chanelles seeking out of Stygian poole a downe,
His Lerney labour sore affright his fertile heads doth drowne.
Of greedy Ditis after this doth then the house appere.
The fierce and cruell Stygian dogge doth fray the spirites there,
The which with great and roaring sounde his heads upshaking three,
The kingdome keepes his ugly head with filth full foule to see
The serpentes licke : his hayres be fowle with vypers set among,
And at his crooked wrested tayle doth hysse a Dragon longe :
Lyke yre to shape, when him he wyst his pace that way to take,
His bristle hayres he lifteth up with fierce up bended snake :
And sounde sent out he soone perceyves in his applyed eare,
Who even the sprits is wont to sent as soone as stoode more neare
The sonne of Jove, the doubtfull dogge strait couched downe in denne,
And eche of them did feare, beholde with dolefull barking then
The places dumme he makes a dred, the threatning serpent stout
Through all the fieldes about doth hysse : the bawling noyse sent out
Of dredfull voyce from triple mouth, even sprits that happy bee
Doth make afrayde, from left side then strayte way undoeth hee
The cruell Jawes, and Lyons head once slayne in Cleon fielde
Agaynst him sets, and cover doth himselfe with mighty shielde.
And bearing in his conquering hande a sturdy club of Oke,
Nowe here, now there he rolleth him about with often stroke :
His stripes he doubles : he subdew'de his threates asswaged all,
And all his heads the weary dogge at once full lowe let fall,
And quite out of the denn he fled, full greatly feared (set
In regall throne) both king and queene, and bad him to bee set
And me likewyse they gave for gyft to Hercles craving mee.
The monsters heavy neckes with hand then strooking downe all three,
In lynked chayne he byndeth faste forgetting then his strength
The dogge the watchefull keeper of the kingdome darke at length

Layth downe his eares full sore affray'de : and suffring to be led,
And eke acknowledging his lorde, following wyth lowly hed,
With tayle that snakes theron doth beare he both his sides doth smight.
But after that to Tænare mouth we came, and clearenes bright
Had strooke his eyes of light unknowne, good stomacke yet agayne
He takes although once overcome, and now the happy chayne
He raging shakes : he had almost his leader pluckt from place,
And headlong backward drawne to hell, and moved from his pace.
And even to my handes Hercles then his eyes did backward cast,
Wee both with double joyned strength the dogge out drawne at last
For anger woode, and battells yet attempting all in vayne,
Brought up to world, as soone as he the cleere ayre sawe agayne,
And spaces pure of bryght fayre poale had once behelde with eye,
The nyght arose : his sight to ground he turned by and by,
Cast downe his eyes, and hatefull day forthwith he put to flight,
And backward turnd away his looke, and streight with all his might
To th' earthe he falles : and underneath the shade of Hercles then
He hyd his head, therewith there came a great resorte of men
With clamour glad, that did the bay about theyr forheads bryng :
And of the noble Hercules deserved prayses sing.

CHORUS

Eurystheus borne with swiftned birth in hast,
Did bid to bottome of the Worlde to go :
This only lackt of labours all at last,
To spoyle the Kyng of thyrde estate also.
The dongeons darke to enter ventred hee,
Where as the way to sprits farre of doth bring
Full sadde, and woode so blacke and fear'de to bee :
But full with flocke full great him following.
As great a preasse as flocke in cyties streetes,
To see the Playes of Theatre newe wrought :

THE FIRST TRAGEDY

As great as at Eleus thundrer meetes,
When Sommer fift the sacred game hath brought :
As great as when comes houre of longer night,
And willing quiet sleepes to bee extent,
Holdes equall Libra Phœbus Chariots light,
A sorte the secrete Ceres doe frequent,
And from their howsen left doe hast to comme,
The Atticke priestes the nyghte to celebrate :
Such heape is chaste beneath by fieldes so dumme.
With age full slowe some taking forth their gate
Full sad, and fillde with life so long now led :
Some yet doe runne the race of better yeares,
The virgins yet unjoynde to Spowses bed,
And yonglings eke on whom grow yet no heare ;
And Infant lately taught his mothers name.
To these alone, (that they the lesse might feare)
Is graunted night to ease with foreborne flame.
The rest full sad by darke doe wander theare :
As is our mynde, when once away is fled
The lyght, when eche man sorry feeles to bee
Deepe overwhelmde with all the earth his hed.
Thick Chaos standes, and darknesse fowle to see,
And colour ill of night, and slouthfull state
Of silent World, and divers Cloudes about.
Let hoary age us thyther bring full late.
No man comes late to that, whence never out,
When once hee is come, turne agayne he may.
To hast the hard and heavy Fate what vayles ?
This wandring heape in wyde landes farre away,
Shall goe to Ghostes : and all shall geve their sayles
To flowe Cocytus all is to thee enclinde,
Both what the fall, and rise of sonne doth see :
Spare us that comme, to thee wee death are signde :
Though thou be slow, our selves yet haste doe wee.
Fyrst houre, that gave the lyfe, it loast agayne.

THE THIRD ACTE

To Thebes is come the joyfull day,
Your Aulters touch yee humbylly,
The fat fayre Sacrifices slay,
Maydes myxte with men in company
Let them in solempne Flockes goe royle :
And nowe wyth yoake layde downe let cease
The Tillers of the fertile Soyle.
Made is wyth hande of Hercles peace
Betweene the morne and Hespers Glade,
And where Sonne holding myddle seate,
Doth make the Bodyes caste no Shade.
What ever grounde is overweate
Wyth compasse longe of Seas abought,
Alcydes laboure taemde full well.
Hee over Foordes of Tartare brought
Returnde appeased beeinge Hell.
There is remayning nowe no feare,
Nought lyes beyonde the Hell to see.
O Priest thy staring Lockes of heare
Wrappe in wyth loved Poplar tree.

THE FOURTHE ACTE

HERCULES, THESEUS, AMPHITRYON, MEGARA

ITH my revenging right hand slayne now Lycus loe the ground
With groveling face hath smit : then who soever fellow found
Of Tyraunt was, partaker of his paynes did also lye.
Nowe to my father sacrifice and Gods victor will I,
And aulters that deserve it, with slayne offrings reverence.
Thee, thee O mate of all my toyles I pray and my defence
O warrefull Pallas, in whose left hand the cleare shielde Ægis shakes
Fierce threats, with head that eche thing stone that lookes upon it makes.
Let tamer of Lycurgus nowe, and of red Sea be heare,
That poynct of speare with Ivye greene in hand doth cover'de beare :
And two Gods powre, both Phœbus, and his Syster to I pray
The sister meeter for her shaftes, but hee on th' harpe to play :
And what soever brother ells of myne doth dwell in sky,
Not of my stepdame brother, bring yee hyther by and by
Your plentuous flocks, what ever have all th' Indians fruicts brought out,
And what sweete odours th' Arabickes doe get in trees about,
To th' aulters bring : let vapour fat and fume smoke up full hye,
Let rounde about the Poplar tree my hayres now beautifye
Let th' olive bowe thee hyde with braunche accustom'de in our lande
Theseu : for foorthwith reverence the thundrer, shall my hande.
Th. O Gods the builders of the towne, and which of Dragon fell,
The wilde woods dens, and noble waves likewise of Dirces well,

And Tyrian house enhabite eke of straunger wandring king.
HE. Cast into fyres the frankencense. AM. Sonne fyrst thy hands flowing
With bloudy slaughter, and the death of enmy purify.
HER. Would God the bloud of hatefull head even unto Gods on hye
I might out shed, for lycour loe more acceptable none
Myght th' aulters stayne : nor sacrifice more ample any one
Nor yet more plentyfull may bee to Jove above downe cast,
Then king unjust. AM. Desyre that now thy father ende at last
Thy labours all : let quietnes at length yet gieven bee,
And rest tó weary folke. HER. I will thee prayers make, for mee
And Jove ful meete in this due place let stand the haughty skye,
And land, and ayre, and let the starres dryve forth eternally
Their course unstayde : let restful peace kepe nations quietly,
Let labour of the hurtles land all yron now occupye,
And swordes lye hyd : let tempest none ful vyolent and dyre
Disturbe the sea : let from the skyes no flash of lightning fyre
Fall downe whyle Jove ful angry is : nor yet with winter snowe
Encreased flood the ground upturnde, and field quyte overthrowe.
Let poysons cease : and from hensforth let up from ground aryse
No greevous hearbe with hurtful sappe : nor fierce and fell lykewyse
Let tyrantes raygne but if to sight some other mischiefe bringe
The ground yet shall, let it make hast : and any monstruous thinge
If it prepare let it be myne, but what meanes this ? myd day
The darkenes have incloas'd aboute lo Phœbus goeth his way
With face obscure without a clowde who dryves the day to flight,
And turnes to east ? from whence doth now his dusky hed the night
Unknowne bring forth ? whence fil the poale so many rownde about
Of daytyme starres ? lo here behold my laboure first ful stout
Not in the lowest parte of heaven the Lyon shyneth bryght,
And fervently doth rage with yre, and byttes prepares to fyght.
Even now loe he some star wil take, with mouth full wyde to see
He threatning standes, and fires out blowes and mane up rustleth he
Shaking with necke the harvest sad of shape, what ever thinge,
And what soever winter colde in frosen tyme doth bring,
He with one rage wil overpasse, of spring tyme bull he will
Both seeke and breake the neckes at once. AM. What is this sodayne yll ?

Thy cruel count'naunce whether sonne dost thou cast here and there ?
And seest with troubled daseld syght false shape of heaven appere.
Her. The land is tam'de the swelling seas their surges did asswage,
The kingdomes lowe of hell lykewyse have felt and knowne my rage,
Yet heaven is free, a labour meete for Hercules to prove.
To spaces high I wil be borne of haughty skies above
Let th' ayre be skaeld, my father doth me promise starres t' obtayne.
What if he it denyde ? all th' earth can Hercles not contayne,
And geeves at length to gods, me calles of one accorde beholde
The whole assembly of the gods, and doth their gates unfolde,
Whyle one forbyddes, receyv'st thou mee, and openest thou the skye,
Or els the gate of stubburne heaven draw after me do I ?
Do I yet doubt ? I even the bondes from Saturne wyll undoe,
And even agaynst the kingdome prowde of wicked father loe
My graundsyre loase. Let Titans now prepare agayne their fight
With me theyr captaine raging : stones with woods I will down smight
And hye hilles tops with Centaures full in right hande will I take.
With double mountayne now I will a stayre to Gods up make.
Let Chyron under Ossa see his Pelion mountayne gret :
Olympus up to heaven above in thyrd degree then set
Shall come it selfe, or ells be cast. Am. Put farre away from thee
The thoughts that ought not to be spoake : of mynde unsounde to see,
But yet full great, the furious rage asswage and lay away.
Her. What meaneth this ? the Gyauntes doe pestiferous armes assay,
And Tityus from the sprights is fled, and bearing torne to see
And empty bosome, loe howe neere to heaven it selfe stoode hee ?
Cythæron falles, the mountayne hie Pallene shakes for feare,
And torne are Tempe, he the tops of Pindus caught hath here,
And Oethen he, some dredfull thing threatning doth rage about
Erynnis bringing flames : with stripes she soundes nowe shaken out,

And burned brandes in funeralles, loe yet more neare and neare
Throwes in my face : fearce Tisyphone with head and ugly heare
With serpentes set, nowe after dogge set out with Hercles hand,
That empty gate shee hath shut up, with bolte of fyry brande.
But loe the stocke of enmious king doth hidden yet remayne,
The wicked Lycus seede : but to your hatefull father slayne
Even now this right hande shall you sende let nowe his arrowes light
My bowe out shoote : it seemes the shaftes to goe with such a flight
Of Hercles. Am. Whether doth the rage and fury blinde yet goe ?
His mighty Bowe he drewe with hornes together driven loe,
And quiver loaste : great noyese makes with violence sent out
The shaft, and quight the weapon flewe his middle necke throughout,
The wound yet left. Her. His other broode I overthrow will quight,
And corners all. What stay I yet ? to me a greater fyght
Remaynes then all Mycenes loe, that rockye stones should all
Of Cyclops being overturn'de with hande of myne, downe fall.
Let shake both here, and there the house, with all stayes overthrowne,
Let breake the poasts : and quight let shrinke the shaken piller downe :
Let all the Pallace fall at once. I here yet hidden see
The sonne of wycked father. Am. Loe his flattring handes to thee
Applying to thy knees dooth crave his lyfe with piteous mone.
O wicked gylt, full sad, and eike abhorde to looke upone,
His humble right hand caught he hath, and raging rounde about
Him rolled twyse, or thryse hath cast, his head resoundeth out,
The sprinkled houses with the brayne of him throwne out are wet.
But shee poore wretch her little sonne in bosome hyding yet
Loe Megara, like one in rage doth from the corners flee.
Her. Though runagate in bosome of the thundrer hid thou bee,
This right hand shall from every where thee seeke, and bring to sight.
Am. Wher goest thou wretch ? what lurking dens, seekst thou to take, or flight ?
No place of savegarde is if once bee Hercles styrde with yre :
But doe thou rather him embrace, and with thy meeke desyre

Assay t' asswage him. Me. Husband spare us I beseech thee nowe,
And knowe thy Megara, this sonne thy countenaunce doth showe,
And bodyes pytche : behould'st thou howe his hands up lyfteth hee?
Her. I holde my stepdame : followe on due penaunce paye to mee,
And bounden Jove from fylthy bonde deliver free away :
But I before the mother will this litle monster slay.
Me. Thou mad man whither goest thou ? wylt thou thine owne bloude sheade ?
Am. Th' infant with fathers fyry face astonnied all for dread,
Died even before the wounde : his feare hath tooke away his lyfe.
And now likewise his heavy club is shaken towarde his wyfe :
He broaken hath the bones, her head from blocklyke body gone
Is quight, nor any where it stayes, dar'ste thou this looke upone
To long lyv'de age ? if mourning doe the greeve, thou hast then loe
The death preparde. Doe thou thy breast uppon his weapons throe,
Or ells this club with slaughter stayn'de of monsters slayne that bee,
Nowe hyther turne, thy parent false, unfit for name of thee
Ryd hence away, least he should be to thy renowne a let.
Th. Which way the father toward thy death dost thou thy selfe cast yet ?
Or whyther goest thou mad man ? flee and lye thou cloasely hid,
And yet from handes of Hercules this onely myschiefe rid.
Her. T'is well, the house of shameful king is now quight overthrowne.
To thee O spouse of greattest Jove I have loe beaten downe
This offred flocke : I gladly have fulfill'de my wyshes all
Full meete for thee, and Argos now geve other offrings shall.
Am. Thou hast not sonne yet all perform'de, fill up the sacrifise.
Loe th' offring doth at th' aultars stande, it waytes thy hand likewyse
With necke full prone : I geve my selfe, I roon, I follow loe.
Mee sacrifice. What meaneth this ? his eyes rolle to and froe,
And heavines doth dull his sight, see I of Hercules
The trembling hands ? downe falles his face to sleepe and quietnes,
And weary necke with bowed head full fast doth downeward shrynke,
With bended knee : nowe all at once he downe to ground doth sinke,
As in the woods wylde Ashe cut downe, or Bulwarke for to make
A Haven in Seas. Liv'ste thou ? or els to death doth thee betake

The selfe same rage, that hath sent all thy famyly to death ?
It is but sleepe, for to and fro doth goe and come his breath.
Let tyme bee had of quietnesse, that thus by sleepe and rest
Great force of his disease subdew'de, may ease his greeved brest.
Remove his weapons servants, least he mad get them agayne.

CHORUS

Let th' ayre complayne, and eke the parent great
Of haughty Sky, and fertile land throughout,
And wandring wave of ever moving freat.
And thou before them all, which lands about
And trayn of Sea thy beames abroade dost throe
With glittring face, and mak'st the night to flee,
O fervent Titan : bothe thy settinges loe
And rysing, hath Alcides seene wyth thee :
And knowne lykewise hee hath thy howsen twayne.
From so great ills release yee nowe hys brest,
O Gods release : to better turne agayne
His ryghter mynde, and thou O tamer best
O sleepe of toyles, the quietnesse of mynde,
Of all the lyfe of man the better parte,
O of thy mother Astrey wynged kynde,
Of hard and pyning death that brother arte,
With truth mingling the false, of after state
The sure, but eke the worste foreteller yet :
O Father of all thynges of Lyfe the gate,
Of lyght the rest, of nyght and fellowe fyt,
That com'st to Kyng, and servaunt equally,
And gently cherysshest who weary bee,
All mankynde loe that dreadfull is to dye,
Thou doost constrayne long death to learne by thee.
Keepe him fast bounde wyth heavy sleepe opprest,
Let slomber deepe his Limmes untamed bynde,
Nor soner leave his unright raginge breaste
Then former mynd his course agayne may fynd.

THE FIRST TRAGEDY

Loe layd on ground with full fierce hart yet still
His cruel sleepes he turnes : and not yet is
The plague subdude of so great raging yll
And on great club the weary head of his
He wont to laye, doth seeke the staffe to fynde
With empty handes his armes out casting yet
With moving vayne : nor yet all rage of minde
He hath layd downe, but as with Sowthwind greate
The wave once vext yet after kepeth still
His raging long, and though the wind now bee
Asswaged swelles, shake of theis madde and yll
Tossinges of mynde, returne let piety,
And vertue to the man, els let be so
His mynde with moving mad toste every waye :
Let errour blynd, where it begun hath, go,
For naught els now but only madnes maye
Thee gyltles make : in next estate it standes
To hurtles handes thy mischiefe not to know.
Now stroken let with Hercules his handes
Thy bosome sounde : thyne armes the worlde allow
Were wonte to beare, let grevous strypes now smyte
With conquering hande, and lowde complayning cryes,
Let th' ayre now heare, let of darke pole and nighte
The Queene them hear, and who ful fyercely lyes
That beares his neckes in mighty chaynes fast bounde,
Low lurking Cerberus in deepest cave.
Let Chaos all with clamour sad resound,
And of broad sea wide open wasting wave.
And th' ayre that felt thy weapons beter yet, but felt them though.
The breastes with so great yls as these beset,
With litle stroake they must not beaten bee.
Let kingdomes three sound with one playnt and crye,
And thou neckes honour and defence to see,
His arrowe strong longe hanged up on hye,
And quivers light the cruell stripes now smyte
On his fierce backe his shouldars strong and stout

Let oken club now strike, and poast of might
With knots ful hard his brestee load all aboute.
Let even his weapons so great woes complayne
Not you pore babes mates of your fathers praise,
With cruell wound revenging kinges agayne :
Not you your lims in Argos barriars playes,
Are taught to turne with weapons strong to smite
And strong of hand yet even now daring loe
The weapons of the Scithian quiver light
With stedy hand to paise set out from bow.
And stags to perce that save them selves by flight
And backes not yet ful maend of cruel beast.
To Stigian havens goe ye of shade and night
Goe hurtles soules, whom mischiefe hath opprest
Even in fyrst porch of lyfe but lately had,
And fathers fury goe unhappy kind
O litle children, by the way ful sad
Of journey knowen.
Goe see the angry kynges.

THE FIFTHE ACTE

HERCULES, AMPHITRYON, THESEUS

HAT place is this ? what region ? or of the world what coast ?
Where am I ? under ryse of sunne or bond els uttermost
Of th' ycy beare or els doth here of sea of Hespery
The fardest ground appoynt a bond for th' ocean sea to lye ?
What ayre draw we ? to weary wight what ground is underset ?
Of truth we are returnd from hell whence in my house downe bet
See I these bloudy bodyes ? hath not yet my mynd of cast
Th' infernall shapes ? but after yet returnd from hel at last
Yet wander doth that helly heape before myne eys to see ?
I am asham'de to graunt, I quake, I know not what to me,
I cannot tell what greevous yll my mynde before doth know.
Where is my parent ? where is shee with goodly childrens show
My noble harty stomackt spouse why doth my left syde lacke
The lyons spoyle ? which way is gone the cover of my backe ?
And selfe same bedde ful soft for slepe of Hercules also ?
Where are my shaftes ? where is my bow ? then from my living who
Could plucke away ? who taken hath the spoyles so great as these
And who was he that feared not even sleepe of Hercules ?
To see my conquerour me lykes, yt lykes me hym to know
Ryse victor up, what new sonne hath my father gotten now
Heaven beynge left ? at byrth of whom myght ever stayd bee
A longer night then, was in myne ? what mischiefe do I see ?
My children loe do lye on ground with bloudy slaughter slayne :
My wyfe is kild : what Lycus doth the kingdome yet obtayne ?

Who durst so haynous giltes as these at Thebes take in hand
When Hercles is returnd ? who so Ismenus waters land,
Who so Acteons fieldes or who with double seas beset
The shaken Pelops kingdomes dost of Dardan dwell on yet
Helpe me : of cruel slaughter show who may the author bee.
Let rage my yre and all : my foe he is who so to me
Shewes not my foe dost thou yet hyde Alcides victorly ?
Come forth, even whether thou revenge the cruel charyots hye
Of Bloudy Thracian king or yf thou Gerions catell quight
Or lordes of Lybia, no delay there is with thee to fight.
Beholde I naked stande, although even with my weapons loe
Thou me unarmed sette uppon. Wherfore fleeth Theseus soe,
And eke my father from my sight ? theyr faces why hyde they ?
Deferre your weepings, and who did my wyfe and children sley
Thus all at once, me tell. Wherfore O father dost thou whusht ?
But tell thou Theseu, but Theseu with thy accustom'd truste.
Ech of them sylent hydes away their bashefull count'naunces,
And privily they shed their teares in so great ils as these,
Of what ought wee asham'de to be ? doth ruler yet of might
Of Argos towne, or hateful band of sowldiars apt to sight
Of Lycus dying, us oppresse with such calamity ?
By prayse of all my noble actes I do desyre of thee
O father, and of thy great name approv'de to me alway
The prosperous powre declare to mee, who did my houshold slay ?
Whose pray lay I ? Am. Let thus thyne ylles in sylens overpas.
Her. That I should unrevenged bee ? Am. Revenge oft hurtful was.
Her. Did ever man so greevous yls without revenge sustayne ?
Am. Whos'ever greater fearde. Her. Then these O father yet agayne
May any greater thing, or els more grevous feared be ?
Am. How great a part is it thou wotst of thy calamity ?
Her. Take mercy father, lo I lift to thee my humble hands.
What meaneth this ? my hand fleeth backe, some privy gylt their standes
Whence comes this bloud ? or what doth mean flowing with death of child
The shaft imbrewd with slaughter once of Lerney monster kilde ?

THE FIRST TRAGEDY

I see my weapons now, the hand I seeke no more to witte.
Whose hand could bend this bow but myne ? or what right arme but it
Could string the bow that unto mee even scantly doth obay ?
To you I turne : O father deare, is this my gylt I pray ?
They held their peace : it is myne own. Am. Thy grevous woe is there,
The cryme thy stepdames : this mischaunce no falt of thyne hath here.
Her. From every part now father throw in wrath thy thunders mighte,
And of thy sonne forgetful now with cruel hand requighte
At least thy nephewes, let the world that beares the starres sounde out.
And let both th' one and th' other poale, flyng downe thy flames aboute :
And let the bankes of Caspyan sea my bounden body teare,
And gredy foule. Wherfore do of Prometheus lacke heare
The rockes ? with huge and haughty top let now prepared be,
Both feeding beastes and foules, the syde of Caucas turne to see,
And bare of woods, the yle that bridge of Scithe that therby standes
Simplegas joynes, both here and there let it my bounden handes
Stretch out abroade : and when with course return'de accustomd'ly
They shall togeather dryve, and shall the rockes tosse up to skye
With bankes togeather beyng thrust, and eke the middle seay,
Let me betweene the mountaynes lye unquiet restlesse stay
But building up with wood throwne on a heaped pile on hie
My body thus with wicked bloud besprinct, why burne not I ?
So, so yt must be done : to hell I Hercles will restore.
Am. Not yet his hart astonied lackes his ragyng tumult sore,
But wrathe hath turnd : and which of rage is property and yre
Agaynst himselfe he rageth now. Her. The furies places dire
And dungeon depe of sprites in hell and place of tormentry
To gylty ghostes and banishment yf any yet do lye
Beyond Erebus, yet unknowen to Cerberus and mee,
There hyde me ground to farthest bond of Tartarus to see.
To tary there Ile goe O brest of myne to fierce and stoute :
Who you my children thus disprest through all my house about,

May worthely enough bewayle ? in all my evils yet
This countnaunce hard can never weepe, a sword now hether set :
My shaftes reach hether, hyther reach my mighty club also :
To thee my weapons breake I will, to thee my sonne a two
Ile knappe my bowes, and eke my clubbe, this blocke of heavy wayghts
Shal to thy sprites be burned loe : this selfe same quiver frayght
With Lerney shaftes to funerall of thyne shall likewyse goe.
Let all my weapons penance pay and you unhappy to
Even with my weapons burne I wil, O stepdames handes of myne.
Th. Who ever yet to ignoraunce hath geven name of cryme ?
Her. Ful oftentymes did errour greate the place of gylt obtayne.
Th. T'is neede to be a Hercles now, this heape of yll sustayne.
Her. Not so, hath shame yet geven place with fury drowned quight :
But peoples all I rather should dryve from my wicked sight,
My weapons, weapons Theseus, I quickly crave to mee
Withdraw to be restoard agayne : if sound my mynd now bee,
Restore to me my weapons : if yet last my rage of mynd,
Then father flee : for I the waye to death my selfe shal fynde.
Am. By sacred holy kynreds rightes, by force and duty all
Of both my names, if eyther me thy brynger up thou call,
Or parent els, and (which of good men reverenced are)
By these hoare hayres, I the besech my desert age yet spare,
And wery yeares of house laine downe the one alonly stay,
One onely light to mee, with yls afflicted every way
Reserve thy selfe : yet never hath there happ'ned once of thee
Fruite of thy toyles : still eyther I the doubtful sea to see
Or monsters feard : who ever yet hath bene a cruell king
In all the world to ghostes allow, and aulters both hurtinge,
Of me is feard : the father of thee absent stil to have
The fruite, the touching, and the sight of thee at length I crave.
Her. Wherfore I longer should sustayn my life yet in this light,
And linger here no cause there is, all good lost have I quighte,
My mynd, my weapons, my renoume, my wife, my sonnes, my handes,
And fury to no man may heale and lose from gylty bandes
My mynd defyeld : needes must with death be heald so haynous yll.
Th. Wilt thou thy father slay ? Her. Least I shoulde do it die I will.

TH. Before thy fathers face ? HER. I taught him mischief for to see.
TH. Thy deedes marking rather that should of al remembred bee,
Of this one only cryme I do a pardon of thee crave.
HER. Shall he geve pardon to himselfe, that to none els it gave ?
I beeing bidden prayse deserv'd, this deede mine owne doth prove.
Helpe father now, if eyther els thy piety thee move,
Or els my heavy fate, or els the honour and renowne.
Of stained strength, my weapons bringe, let fortune be throwen downe.
With my right hand. TH. The prayers which thy father makes to thee
Are stronge enough, but yet likewyse with weeping loe of me
Be moved yet : aryse thou up, and with thy wonted myght
Subdue thyne yls : now such a mynde unmeete to beare upright
No evill hap, receyve againe, loe now with manhode gret
Thou must prevayle, even Hercules forbyd with yre to fret.
HER. Alyve, I hurt : but if I dye I take the gylt also.
I hast to ridde the world of cryme even now before me lo
A wicked monster cruel, and untamed fierce and stout
Doth wander : now with thy ryght hand beginne to goe aboute
A greate affayre, yea more then all thy twyse sixe labours long.
Yet stayst thou wretch, that late agaynst the children wast so stronge,
And fearful mother now except restoard my weapons bee
Of Thracian Pindus eyther I wil teare downe every tree,
And Bacchus holly woods and tops of mount Cythæron hye
Burne with my selfe, and al at once with all their housen I
And with the Lordes therof the roofes with goddes of Thebes all
The Thebane temples even uppon my body will let fall :
And wyl be hyd in towne upturnd : if to my shoulders might
The walles themselves all cast theron shall fall a burden light,
And coverd with seven gates I shall not be enough opprest,
Then all the wayght wheron the worlde in middle part doth rest,
And partes the Goddes uppon my head Ile turne and overthrow
My weapons geve. AM. This word is meete for Hercles father lo
With this same arrow slaine behold thy sonne is tombled downe,
This weapons cruell Juno lo from handes of thyne hath throwne,

This same will I now use, loe see how leaps with feare afright
My wretched harte, and how it doth my careful body smight.
The shaft is set therto thou shalt a mischiefe lo do now
Both willing it and wotting : tel, what thing commaundest thou ?
I nothing crave my doloure loe in saf'ty standeth now,
To kepe my sonne alyve to mee that onely do canst thou
O Theseu, yet I have not scapte great'st feare that happen can
Thou canst mee not a miser make, thou mayst a happy man
So order every thyng thou dost, as all thy cause in hand,
And fame thou mayst wel know in strayght and doubtful case to stande
Thou liv'st, or diest : this slender soule that light is hence to flee,
Weried with age, and no lesse bet with grevous ils to see,
In mouth I holde so slowly to a father with such staye
Doth any man geve lyfe ? I wil no longer bid delay,
The deadly sword throughout my breast to strike I wil apply,
Here, here the gylt of Hercules even sound of mynd shall lye.
Her. Forbeare O father now forbeare, withdraw thy hand againe.
My manhood yeld thy fathers will, and impery sustaine.
To Hercles labours now likewyse, let this one labour goe,
Let me yet live, lift up from ground th' afflicted lims with woe
O Theseu of my parent : for whom Godly touch doth flee
My wicked hand. Am. I gladly do this hand embrace to mee.
By this I beyng slayed will goe, this moving to my brest
Ile slake my woes. Her. What place shall I seeke ronnagate for rest ?
Where shall I hyde my selfe ? or in what land my selfe engrave ?
What Tanais, or what Nilus els, or with his Persyan wave
What Tygris violent of streame, or what fierce Rhenus flood,
Or Tagus troublesome that flowes with Ibers treasures good
May my ryght hand now wash from gylt ? although Mæotis cold
The waves of all the Northen sea on me shed out now wolde,
And al the water therof shoulde now pas by my two handes,
Yet wil the mischiefe deepe remayne, alas into what landes
Wilt thou O wicked man resort ? to East or westerne coste ?
Ech where wel knowen, all place I have of banishment quight loste
From me the worlde doth flee a back, the starres that sydelyng rone
Do backwarde dryve their turned course, even Cerberus the sone

THE FIRST TRAGEDY

With better count'naunce did behold O faythfull friend I saye,
O Theseu seeke some lurking place, farre hence out of the way
O thou awarder of mens gyltes what ever Judge thou bee
That hurtful men dost love, repay a worthy thanke to me :
And my desertes. I thee beseech, to ghostes of hell againe
Send me that once escaped them : and subject to thy raine
Restore me yet to those thy bandes, that place shal me wel hyde :
And yet even that place knowes me wel. TH. Our land for thee doth bide
There Mars his hande acquite agayne and made from slaughter free
Restoard to armoure, loe that land (Alcides) calles for thee,
Which wontes to quite the gods, and prove them Innocent to be.

Here endeth the First Tragedye of Seneca, called Hercules furens, translated into Englishe by Jasper Heywood studente in Oxenforde.

THE SECOND TRAGEDIE OF SENECA

ENTITULED THYESTES

FAYTHFULLY ENGLISHED BY JASPER HEYWOOD

FELOW OF ALSOLNE COLLEDGE IN OXENFORDE

THE ARGUMENT OF THIS TRAGEDIE

Megæra one of the Hellish furies raising up Tantalus from Hell, incited him to set mortall hatred betweene his two nephewes Thiestes, and Atreus being brothers, and raining as Kinges over Mycenæ by enterchangeable turnes, that is to witte Thiestes to raine the one yere, and Atreus the other. Now Atreus enraged with furie against his brother partly for defiling and deflouring his wife Ærope by pollicie, and partly for taking from him a Ram with a golden fleese, practised with his servant how to be revenged of his brother. This Atreus therfore dissembling a reconciliation and inviting Thyestes to Mycenæ secretly and unknowne to him, set before him at a banquet the flesh of his owne children to eate. Afterward Atreus having also geven to his said brother the bloud of his children in a goblet to drinke, did lastly commaund the heads also to be brought in, at the doleful sight wherof Thiestes greatly lamenting knowing that he had eaten his owne children, was wonderfully anguished. But Atreus for that he had thus revenged himselfe, toke therin great pleasure and delectation.

THE SPEAKERS

Tantalus.
Megæra.
Atreus.
Servant.
Thiestes.
Philistenes.
Messenger.
Chorus.

THE FIRST ACTE

TANTALUS, MEGÆRA

HAT furye fell enforceth mee to fle, th' unhappy seat,
That gape and gaspe with greedye jawe, the fleeyng food to eate
What God to Tantalus the bowres wher breathing bodyes dwel
Doth shew agayne ? is ought found worse, then burning thyrst of hel
In lakes alow ? or yet worse plague then hunger is there one,
In vayne that ever gapes for foode ? shal Sisyphus his stone,
That slipper restles rollyng payse uppon my backe be borne,
Or shall my lymmes with swifter swinge of whirling whele be torne ?
Or shal my paynes be Tytius panges th' encreasyng liver still,
Whose growing guttes the gnawing gripes and fylthy foules do fyll ?
That styl by nyght repayres the panch that was devourd by day,
And wondrous wombe unwasted lieth a new prepared pray
What ill am I appoynted for ? O cruell judge of sprites,
Who so thou be that tormentes new among the fowles delytes
Stil to dispose, ad what thou canst to all my deadly woe,
That keeper even of dungeon darke would sore abhorre to knowe.
Or hel it selfe it quake to se : for dread wherof likewyse
I tremble wold, that plague seke out : lo now there doth aryse
My broode that shal in mischiefe farre the grandsyers gilt out goe,
And gyltles make : that first shall dare unventred ills to do.
What ever place remayneth yet of all this wicked land,
I wil fill up : and never once while Pelops house doth stand
Shall Minos idle be. Me. Go forth thou detestable sprite
And vexe the Goddes of wicked house with rage of furyes might.

Let them contend with all offence, by turnes and one by one
Let swordes be drawne : and meane of ire procure there may be none,
Nor shame : let fury blynd enflame theyr myndes and wrathful will,
Let yet the parentes rage endure and longer lasting yll
Through childrens children spreade : nor yet let any leysure be
The former fawte to hate, but still more mischiefe newe to see,
Nor one in one : but ere the gylt with vengeance be acquit,
Encrease the cryme : from brethren proud let rule of kingdom flyt
To runnagates : and swarving state of all unstable thinges,
Let it by doubtfull dome be toste, betwene thuncertaine kyngs.
Let mighty fall to misery, and myser clime to might,
Let chaunce turne thempyre upsydowne both geve and take the right.
The banyshed for gylt, when god restore theyr country shall.
Let them to mischiefe fall a fresh as hatefull then to all,
As to themselves : let Ire thinke nought unlawfull to be doon,
Let brother dread the brothers wrath, and father feare the soon,
And eke the soon his parents powre : let babes be murdered yll,
But worse begot ? her spouse betrapt to treasons trayne to kyll,
Let hatefull wyfe awayte, and let them beare through seas their warre,
Let bloodshed lye the lands about and every field a farre :
And over conquerynge captaynes greate, of countreys far to see,
Let lust tryumphe : in wicked house let whoredome counted be
The light'st offens : let trust that in the breasts of brethren breedes,
And truth be gone : let not from sight of your so heynous deedes
The heavens be hyd, about the poale when shyne the starres on hye,
And flames with woonted beames of light doe decke the paynted skye.
Let darkest night bee made, and let the day the heavens forsake.
Dysturbe the godds of wicked house, hate, slaughter, murder make.
Fyll up the house of Tantalus with mischieves and debates,
Adorned be the pillers hygh with bay, and let the gates
Be garnysht greene : and worthy there for thy returne to sight,
Be kyndled fyre : let mischyefe done in Thracia once, theyr lyght

More manyfolde, wherefore doth yet the uncles hand delaye ?
Doth yet Thyestes not bewayle his childrens fatall day ?
Shall he not finde them where with heat of fyres that under glowe
The cawderne boyles ? their limmes eche one a peeces let them go
Disperste : let fathers fires, with blood of chyldren fyled bee :
Let deynties such be drest : it is no mischiefe newe to thee,
To banquet so : behold this day we have to thee releast,
And hunger starved wombe of thyne we send to such a feast.
With fowlest foode thy famyne fyll, let bloud in wyne be drownd,
And dronke in sight of thee : loe now such dishes have I found,
As thou wouldst shonne, stay whither doste thou hedlong way now take ?
Tan. To pooles and floods of hell agayne and styll declining lake,
And flight of tree ful frayght with fruite that from the lippes doth flee,
To dungeon darke of hateful hell let leeful be for me
To goe : or if to light be thought the paynes that there I have,
Remove me from those lakes agayne : in midst of worser wave
Of Phlegethon, to stand in seas of fyre beset to bee.
Who so beneath thy poynted paynes by destenyes decree
Dost stil endure who soo thou bee that underliest alow
The hollow denne, or ruyne who that feares and overthrow
Of fallyng hyl, or cruel cryes that sound in caves of hell
Of greedy roaryng Lyons throats or flocke of furyes fell
Who quakes to know or who the brandes of fyre in dyrest payne
Halfe burnt throwes of harke to the voyce of Tantalus : agayne
That hastes to hel, and, whom the truth hath taught beleeve wel mee
Love wel your paynes, they are but small when shall my hap so bee
To flee the light ? Me. Disturbe thou fyrst thys house with dire discord
Debates and battels bring with thee, and of th' unhappy sworde
Ill love to kinges : the cruel brest stryke through and hateful hart,
With tumult mad. Tan. To suffer paynes it seemeth wel my part,
Not woes to worke : I am sent forth lyke vapoure dyre to ryse,
That breakes the ground or poyson like the plague in wondrouse wyse

That slaughter makes, shall I to such detested crymes, applye
My nephewes hartes ? o parentes great of Gods above the skie
And myne (though sham'de I be to graunt) although with greater pain
My tongue be vext, yet this to speake I may no whit refrayne
Nor hold my peace : I warne you this least sacred hand with bloud
Of slaughter dyre, or fransie fell of frantike fury wood
The aulters slayne, I wil resist : And garde such gylt away.
With strypes why dost thou me affryght ? why threatst thou me to fraye
Those crallyng snakes ? or famine fyxt in empty wombe, wherfore
Dost thou revyve ? now fries within with thyrst enkindled sore
My harte : and in the bowels burnt the boyling flames do glow.
Me. I follow thee : through all this house now rage and fury throwe
Let them be driven so, and so let eyther thirst to see
Each others blood ful wel hath felt the comming in of thee
This house, and all with wicked touch of the begune to quake.
Enough it is, repayre agayne to dens and loathsome lake,
Of floud well knowen, the sadder soyle with heavy fote of thyne
Agreeved is, seest thou from springes how waters do declyne
And inward sinke ? or how the bankes lye voyde by drughty heate ?
And hoatter blast of fyery wynde the fewer cloudes doth beate ?
The treese be spoyld, and naked stand to sight in withred woddes,
The barayne bowes whose fruites are fled : the land betwene the floods
With surge of seas on eyther syde that wonted to resound,
And nearer foordes to seperat sometyme with lesser ground,
Now broader spred, it heareth how aloofe the waters ryse.
Now Lerna turnes agaynst the streame Phoronides likewyse
His poores be stopt, with custom'd course Alphéus dryves not still,
His hollie waves, the trembling tops of high Cithæron hill,
They stand not sure : from height adowne they shake their sylver snowe,
And noble fieldes of Argos feare, theyr former drought to know.
Yea Tytan doubtes himselfe to rolle the worlde his wonted way,
And drive by force to former course the backward drawing daye.

THYESTES

CHORUS

This Argos towne if any God be founde,
And Piseyboures that famous yet remayn,
Or kingdomes els to love of Corinthes ground,
The double havens, or sundred seas in twayne
If any love of Taygetus his snowes,
(By Winter which when they on hils be cast :
By Boreas blastes that from Sarmatia blowes,
With yerely breath the sommer meltes as fast)
Where clere Alphéus runnes with floude so cold,
By playes wel knowen that there Olimpiks hight :
Let pleasaunt powre of his from hense withholde
Such turnes of stryfe that here they may not light :
Nor nephew worse then grandsier spring from us,
Or direr deedes delyght the yonger age.
Let wicked stocke of thirsty Tantalus
At length leave of, and wery be of rage.
Enoughe is done, and naught prevaild the just,
Or wrong : betrayed is Mirtilus and drownde,
That did betray his dame, and with like trust
Borne as he bare, himselfe hath made renound
With chaunged name the sea : and better knowne
To mariners therof no fable is.
On wicked sword the litle infant throwne
As ran the childe to take his fathers kisse.
Unrype for thaulters offring fell downe deade :
And with thy hand (O Tantalus) was rent,
With such a meate for Gods thy boordes to spread.
Eternall famine for such foode is sent,
And thyrst : nor for those daynty meats unmilde,
Might meeter payne appoynted ever bee
With empty throate standes Tantalus begylde,
Above thy wicked head their leanes to thee,
Then Phineys fowles in flight a swifter pray.
With burned bowes declynd on every syde,

And of his fruites all bent to beare the sway,
The tree deludes the gapes of hunger wyde
Though hee full greedy feede theron would fayne.
So oft deceyv'de neglectes to touch them yet :
He turnes his eyes, his jawes he doth refrayne,
And famine fixt in closed gummes doth shet.
But then each braunch his plenteous ritches all,
Lets lower downe, and apples from on hie
With lither leaves they flatter like to fall
And famine styrre : in vayne that bids to trye
His handes : which when he hath rought forth anone
To be beguyld, in higher ayre againe
The harvest hanges and fickle fruite is gone,
Then thirst him greeves no lesse then hungers payne :
Wherwith when kindled is his boyling bloud
Lyke fyre, the wretch the waves to him doth call,
That meete his mouth : which straight the fleeyng floud
Withdrawes, and from the dryed foorde doth fall :
And him forsakes that followes them. He drinkes
The dust so deepe of gulfe that from him shrinkes.

THE SECONDE ACTE

ATREUS, SERVAUNT

DASTARD, cowrde, O wretche, and (which the greatest yet of all
To Tyrantes checke I compte that maye in waighty thinges befall)
O unrevenged: after guyltes so great and brothers guyle,
And trewth trode downe dost thou provoke with vayne complaynts the whyle
Thy wrath? already now to rage all Argos towne throughout
In armoure ought of thyne, and all the double seas about
Thy fleete to ryde: now all the fieldes with fervent flames of thyne,
And townes to flash it wel beseemde: and every where to shyne,
The bright drawne sword: all under foote of horse let every syde
Of Argos lande resound: and let the woundes not serve to hyde
Our foes, nor yet in haughty top of hilles and mountaynes hye,
The builded towers. The people all let them to battel crye
And clere forsake Mycenas towne who so his hateful head
Hides and defendes, with slaughter dire let bloud of him be shed.
This princely Pelops palace proude, and bowres of high renowne,
On mee so on my brother to let them be beaten downe,
Go to, do that which never shall no after age allow,
Nor none it whisht: some mischefe greate ther must be ventred now,
Both fierce and bloudy: such as woulde my brother rather long
To have bene his. Thou never dost enough revenge the wronge,
Exept thou passe. And feercer fact what may be done so dyre,
That his exceedes? doth ever he lay downe his hateful yre?
Doth ever he the modest meane in tyme of wealth regard
Or quiet in adversity? I know his nature harde

Untractable, that broke may be, but never wil it bend.
For which ere he prepare himselfe, or force to fight entend,
Set fyrst on him, least while I rest he should on me aryse.
He wil destroy or he destroyd in midst the mischiefe lyes,
Prepard to him that takes it first. SER. Doth fame of people naught
Adverse thee feare ? ATRE. The greatest good of kingdom may be thought
That still the people are constraynd their princes deedes as well
To prayse, as them to suffer all. SER. Whom feare doth so compell
To prayse, the same his foes to bee, doth feare enforce agayne :
But who indeede the glory seekes of favour trew t'obtayne
He rather would with hates of each be praysd, then tounges of all.
ATRE. The trewer prayse ful oft hath hapt to meaner men to fall :
The false but unto myghty man what nill they let them will.
SER. Let first the king will honest thinges and none the same dare nill.
ATRE. Where leeful are to him that rules but honest thinges alone,
There raynes the kyng by others leave. SER. And where the shame is none,
Nor care of ryght, fayth, piety, nor holines none stayeth,
That kingdome swarves. ATRE. Such holines, such piety and fayth,
Are private goods : let kinges runne one in that that likes their will.
SER. The brothers hurt a mischiefe count though he be nere so ill.
ATRE. It is but right to do to hym, that wrong to brother were.
What heynous hurt hath his offence let passe to prove ? or where
Refraynd the gylt, my spouse he stale away for lechery,
And raygne by stelth : the auncient note and sygne of impery,
By frawde he got : my house by fraud to vexe he never ceast :
In Pelops house there fostred is a noble worthy beast
The close kept Ramme : the goodly guyde of rych and fayrest flockes.
By whom throughout on every syde depend adowne the lockes
Of glittering gold, with fleece of which the new kinges wonted were
Of Tantals stocke their sceptors gylt, and mace of might to beare.
Of this the owner raygneth he, with him of house so great
The fortune fleeth, this sacred Ramme aloofe in safety shet

In secret mead is wont to grase, which stone on every syde
With rocky wall incloseth rounde the fatall beast to hyde.
This beast (adventryng mischiefe greate) adjoyning yet for pray
My spoused mate, the traytour false hath hence convayde away
From hence the wrongs of mutuall hate, and mischiefe all upsprong :
In exile wandred he throughout my kingdomes all along :
No part of myne remayneth safe to mee, from traynes of hys.
My feere deflourde, and loyalty of empyre broken is :
My house all vext, my bloud in doubt, and naught that trust is in,
But brother foe. What stayst thou yet ? at length lo now beginne.
Take hart of Tantalus to thee, to Pelops cast thyne eye :
To such examples well beseemes, I should my hand applye.
Tell thou which way were best to bring that cruell head to death.
Ser. Through perst with sword let him be slayne and yelde his hatefull breath.
Atre. Thou speak'st of th' end : but I him would opres with greter payne.
Let tyrants vexe with torment more : should ever in my rayne
Be gentle death ? Ser. Doth piety in thee prevayle no whit ?
Atre. Depart thou hence all piety, if in this house as yet
Thou ever wert : and now let all the flocke of furies dyre,
And full of strife Erinnis come, and double brands of fyre
Megæra shaking : for not yet enough with fury great
And rage doth burne my boyling brest : it ought to bee repleate,
With monster more. Ser. What mischiefe new do'ste thou in rage provide ?
Atre. Not such a one as may the meane of woonted griefe abide.
No guilt will I forbeare, nor none may be enough despight.
Ser. What sword ? Atre. To litle that. Ser. What fire ? Atre. And that is yet to light.
Ser. What weapon then shall sorrow such finde fit to worke thy will ?
Atre. Thyestes selfe. Ser. Then yre it selfe yet that's a greater ill.
Atre. I graunt : a tombling tumult quakes, within my bosomes loe,
And round it rolles : I moved am and wote not whereunto.
But drawen I am : from bottome deepe the roryng soyle doth cry
The day so fayre with thunder soundes, and house as all from hy

Were rent, from roofe, and rafters crakes : and lares turnde abought
Have wryde theyr sight : so bee'te, so bee'te, let mischiefe such be sought,
As yee O Gods would feare. SER. What thing seek'st thou to bring to pas
I note what greater thing my mynde, and more then woont it was.
ATRE. Above the reache that men are woont to worke, begins to swell :
And slayth with slouthfull hands. What thinge it is I cannot tell :
But great it is. Bee'te so, my mynde now in this feate proceede,
For Atreus and Thyestes bothe, it were a worthy deede.
Let eche of us the crime commit. The Thracian house did see
Such wicked tables once : I graunt the mischiefe great to bee,
But done ere this : some greater guilt and mischiefe more, let yre
Fynde out. The stomacke of thy sonne O father thou enspyre,
And syster eke, like is the cause : assist me with your powre,
And dryve my hand : let greedy parents all his babes devowre,
And glad to rent his children bee : and on their lyms to feede.
Enough, and well it is devis'de : this pleaseth me in deede.
In meane time where is he ? so long and innocent wherefore
Doth Atreus walke ? before myne eyes alredy more and more
The shade of such a slaughter walkes : the want of children cast,
In fathers Jawes. But why my mynde, yet dreadst thou so at last,
And faint'st before thou enterprise ? it must bee done, let bee.
That which in all this mischiefe is the greatest guilt to see,
Let him commit. SER. But what disceit may wee for him prepare,
Whereby betrapt he may be drawne, to fall into the snare ?
He wotes full well we are his foes. ATRE. He could not taken bee,
Except himselfe woulde take : but now my kingdomes hopeth hee.
For hope of this he woulde not feare to meete the mighty Jove,
Though him he threatned to destroy, with lightning from above.
For hope of this to passe the threats of waves he will not fayle,
Nor dread no whit by doubtfull shelves, of Lybike seas to fayle,
For hope of this (which thing he doth the woorst of all beleeve,)
He will his brother see. SER. Who shall of peace the promise geeve ?

Whom will he trust ? Atre. His evill hope will soone beleve it well.
Yet to my sonnes the charge which they shall to theyr unckle tell,
We will commit : that whom he would from exile come agayne,
And myseries so : kingdome chaunge, and over Argos raygne
A king of halfe : and though to hard of heart our prayers all
Him selfe despise, his children yet nought woting what may fall,
With travels tier'de, and apte to be entys'de from misery,
Requests will move : on th' one side his desyre of Imperie,
On th' other syde his poverty, and labour hard to see,
Will him subdue and make to yeelde, although full stoute he bee.
Ser. His travayles now the time hath made to seeme to him but small.
Atre. Not so : for day by day the griefe of ill encreaseth all.
T'is light to suffer miseries, but heavy them t' endure.
Ser. Yet other messengers to send, in such affayres procure.
Atre. The yonger sorte the wrose precepts do easely harken to.
Ser. What thing agaynst their buckle now, you them enstruckt to do,
Perhaps with you to worke the like, they will not be a dread.
Such mischiefe wrought hath oft return'de upon the workers head.
Atre. Though never man to them the wayes of guile and guilt have taught,
Yet kingdome will. Fear'st thou they should be made by counsel naught ?
They are so borne. That which thou cal'ste a cruell enterpryse,
And dyrely deemest doone to be, and wickedly likewise,
Perhaps is wrought agaynst me there. Ser. And shall your sons of this
Disceipt beware that worke you will ? no secretnes there is
In theyr so greene and tender yeares : they will your traynes disclose,
Atre. A privy counsell cloase to keepe, is learnde with many woes.
Ser. And will yee them, by whom yee woulde he should beguiled bee,
Them selves beguil'de ? Atre. Nay let them both from fault and blame be free.
For what shall neede in mischiefes such as I to woorke entende,
To mingle them ? let all my hate by mee alone take ende.

Thou lean'ste thy purpose ill my mynde : if thou thine owne forbeare,
Thou sparest him. Wherefore of this let Agamemnon heare
Be mynister : and Client eke of myne for such a deede,
Let Menelaus present bee : truth of th' uncertayne seede,
By such a practise may be tri'de : if it refuse they shall,
Nor of debate will bearers be, if they him unckle call,
He is their father : let them goe. But much the fearefull face
Bewrayes it selfe : even him that faynes the secret wayghty case,
Doth oft betray : let them therefore not know, how great a guyle
They goe about. And thou these things in secret keepe the whyle.
SER. I neede not warned bee, for these within my bosome deepe,
Both fayth, and feare, but chiefely fayth, doth shet and closely kepe.

CHORUS

The noble house at length of high renowne,
The famous stocke of auncient Inachus,
Apeasd and layd the threats of brethren down.
But nowe what fury styrs and drives you thus
Eche one to thyrst the others bloud agayne,
Or get by guylt the golden Mace in hande?
Yee litle wote that so desyre to raygne,
In what estate or place doth kyngdome stande.
Not ritches makes a kyng or high renowne,
Not garnisht weede wyth purple Tyrian die,
Not lofty lookes, or head encloasde with crowne,
Not glyttring beames with golde and turrets hie.
A Kyng he is that feare hath layde aside,
And all affects that in the breast are bred :
Whom impotent ambition doth not guide,
Nor fickle favour hath of people led.
Nor all that west in mettalls mynes hath founde,
Or chanell cleere of golden Tagus showes,
Nor all the grayne that thresshed is on grounde,
That with the heate of libyk harvest glowes.

Nor whom the flasshe of lightning flame shall beate,
Nor eastern wynde that smightes upon the seas,
Nor swelling surge with rage of wynde repleate,
Or greedy Gulphe of Adria displease.
Whom not the pricke of Souldiers sharpest speare,
Or poyncted pyke in hand hath made to rue,
Nor whom the glympse of swoorde myght cause to feare,
Or bright drawen blade of glyttring steele subdue.
Who in the seate of safty sets his feete,
Beholdes all haps how under him they lye,
And gladly runnes his fatall day to meete,
Nor ought complaynes or grudgeth for to dye.
Though present were the Prynces everychone,
The scattered Dukes to chase that wonted bee,
That shyning seas beset with precious stone,
And red sea coastes doe holde, lyke bloud to see :
Or they which els the Caspian mountaynes hye,
From Sarmats strong with all theyr power withholde :
Or hee that on the floude of Danubye,
In frost a foote to travayle dare bee bolde :
Or Seres in what ever place they lye,
Renownde with fleece that there of sylke doth spring,
They never might the truth hereof denye,
It is the mynde that onely makes a king.
There is no neede of sturdie steedes in warre,
No neede with armes or arrowes ells to fight,
That Parthus woonts with bowe to fling from farre,
Whyle from the fielde hee falsely fayneth flight.
Nor yet to siege no neede it is to bringe
Great Guns in Carts to overthrowe the wall,
That from farre of theyr battring Pellets flyng.
A kyng hee is that feareth nought at all.
Eche man him selfe this kyngdome geeves at hand.
Let who so lyst with mighty mace to raygne,
In tyckle toppe of court delight to stand
Let mee the sweete and quiet rest obtayne.
So set in place obscure and lowe degree,
Of pleasaunt rest I shall the sweetnesse knoe.

My lyfe unknowne to them that noble bee,
Shall in the steppe of secret sylence goe.
Thus when my dayes at length are over past,
And tyme without all troublous tumult spent,
An aged man I shall depart at last,
In meane estate, to dye full well content.
But greevuous is to him the death, that when
So farre abroade the bruite of him is blowne,
That knowne hee is to much to other men :
Departeth yet unto him selfe unknowne.

THE THYRDE ACTE

THYESTES, PHYLISTHENES

MY countrey bowres so long wisht for, and Argos rytches all,
Chiefe good that unto banisht men, and Mysers may befall,
The touch of soyle where born I was, and gods of native land,
(If gods they be,) and sacred towres I see of Cyclops hand :
That represent then all mans woorke, a greater majesty.
Renowned stadies to my youth, where noble sometime I
Have not so seelde as once, the palme in fathers chariot woon.
All Argos now to meete with me, and people fast will roon :
But Atreus to, yet rather leade in woods agayne thy flight,
And bushes thicke, and hid among the brutyshe beastes from sight,
Lyke lyfe to theyrs : where splendent pompe of court and princely pryde,
May not with flattring fulgent face, allure thine eyes aside.
With whom the kingdome geven is, behold, and well regarde,
Beset but late with such mishaps, as all men counte full harde,
I stoute and joyfull was : but now agayne thus into feare
I am returne, my mynde misdoubtes, and backeward seekes to beare
My body hence : and forthe I draw my pace agaynst my will.
PHY. With slouthfull step (what meaneth this ?) my father standeth still,
And turnes his face and holdes him selfe, in doubt what thing to do.
THY. What thing (my minde) considrest thou ? or els so long whereto

Do'st thou so easie counsayle wrest ? wilt thou to thinges unsure
Thy brother and the kingdome trust ? fearst thou those ills t' endure
Now overcome, and mielder made ? and travayls do'st thou flee
That well were plaste ? it thee avayls, a myser now to bee.
Turne hence thy pace while leefull is, and keepe thee from his hande.
Phy. What cause thee drives (O father deere) thus from thy native lande,
Now seene to shrynk ? what makes thee thus from things so good at last
Withdrawe thy selfe ? thy brother comes whose ires be overpast,
And halfe the kyngdome geves, and of the house Dylacerate,
Repayres the partes : and thee restores agayne to former state.
Thy. The cause of feare that I know not, thou do'st require to heare.
I see nothing that makes mee dread, and yet I greatly feare.
I would goe on, but yet my limmes with weary legges doe slacke :
And other way then I would passe, I am withholden backe.
So oft the ship that driven is with wynde and eke with Ore,
The swelling surge resisting both beates backe upon the shore.
Phy. Yet overcome what ever stayes, and thus doth let your mynde,
And see what are at your returne, prepar'de for you to finde.
You may O father raygne. Thy. I may but then when die I mought.
Phy. Chiefe thing is powre. Thy. Nought worth at al, if thou desyre it nought.
Phy. You shall it to your children leave. Thy. The kingdome takes not twayne.
Phy. Who may be happy, rather would he myser yet remayne ?
Thy. Beleve me well, with titles false the great thinges us delight :
And heavy haps in vayne are fearde, while high I stoode in sight,
I never stinted then to quake, and selfe same sworde to feare,
That hanged by myne owne side was. Oh how great good it were,
With none to strive, but careles foode to eate and rest to knowe ?
The greater gyltes they enter not in cotage set alowe :
And safer foode is fed upon, at narrowe boorde alway,
While drunke in golde the poyson is by proofe well taught I say,

That evill haps before the good to love it likes my will.
Of haughty house that standes aloft in tickle top of hyll,
And swayes asyde, the cyty lowe neede never be affright :
Nor in the top of roofe above, there shynes no Ivery bright,
Nor watchman none defendes my sleepes by night, or gardes my rest :
With fleete I fishe not, nor the sees I have not backwarde prest,
Nor turn'de to flight with builded wall : nor wicked belly I
With taxes of the people fed : nor parcell none doth lie,
Of ground of myne beyonde the Getes : and Parthians farre about :
Nor worshiped with frankinsence I am, nor (Jove shet out)
My Aulters decked are : nor none in top of house doth stande
In garden treese, nor kindled yet with helpe of eche mans hande,
The bathes doe smoake : nor yet are dayes in slouthfull slumbers led,
Nor nightes past forth in watche and wyne, without the rest of bed.
Wee nothing feare, the house is safe without the hidden knyfe,
And poore estate the sweetnes feeles, of rest and quiet lyfe.
Greate kindome is to be content, without the same to lyve.
Phy. Yet should it not refused be, if God the kingdome give.
Thy. Not yet desierd it ought to be. Phy. Your brother byds you rayne.
Thy. Bids he ? the more is to be fearde : there lurketh there some trayne.
Phy. From whence it fell, yet piety is woont to turne at length :
And love unfaynde, repayres agayne his erst omitted strength.
Thy. Doth Atreus then his brother love ? eche Ursa fyrst on hye,
The Seas shall washe, and swelling surge of Seas of Sicylye
Shall rest and all asswaged be : and corne to rypenes growe
In bottome of Ionian seas, and darkest night shall showe
And spreade the light about the soyle : the waters with the fyre,
The lyfe with death, the wynde with seas, shall friendship first requyre,
And be at league. Phy. Of what deceipte are you so dreadfull here ?
Thy. Of everychone : what ende at length might I provide of feare ?
In all he can he hateth me. Phy. To you what hurt can he ?
Thy. As for my selfe I nothing dread you litle Babes make mee

Afrayde of him. PHY. Dread, yee to be beguilde when caught yee are :
To late it is to shoon the trayne in middle of the snare.
But goe we on, this (father) is to you my last request.
THY. I follow you. I leade you not. PHY. God turne it to the best
That well devised is for good : passe forth with cherefull pace.

THE SECOND SCENE

ATREUS, THYESTES

ENTRAPT in trayne the beast is caught and in the snare doth fall :
Both him, and eke of hated stocke with him the offspring all,
About the fathers syde I see : and nowe in saufety stands
And surest ground my wrathfull hate : nowe comes into my hands
At length Thyestes : yea hee comes and all at once to mee.
I scant refrayne my selfe, and scant may anger brydled bee.
So when the Bloudhound seekes the beast, by step and quick of sent
Drawes in the leame, and pace by pace to wynde the wayes hee went,
With nose to soyle doth hunt, while he the Boare aloofe hath founde
Farre of by sent, he yet refraynes and wanders through the grounde
With silent mouth : but when at hand he once perceives the pray,
With all the strength he hath he strives, with voyce and calls away
His lingring maister, and from him by force out breaketh hee.
When Ire doth hope the present bloud, it may not hydden bee.
Yet let it hydden be, beholde with ugly hayre to sight
How yrkesomely deform'de with filthe his fowlest face is dight,
How lothsome lyes his Bearde unkempt : but let us friendship fayne.
To see my brother me delights : geve now to me agayne
Embracing long desyred for : what ever stryfe there was
Before this time betwene us twayne, forget and let it pas :

THE THIRD ACTE

Fro this day forth let brothers love, let bloud, and lawe of kinde
Regarded be, let all debate be slakte in eythers mynde.
THY. I coulde excuse my selfe, except thou wert as now thou art.
But (Atreus) now I graunt, the faulte was myne in every part:
And I offended have in all, my cause the worse to bee,
Your this dayes kindnes makes: in deede a guilty wight is hee,
That would so good a brother hurt as you, in any whit.
But now with teares I must entreate, and first I me submit.
These handes that at thy feete doe lye, doe thee beseeche and pray,
That yre and hate be layde aside, and from thy bosome may
Be scraped out: and cleere forgot, for pledges take thou these
O brother deere, these guiltles babes. ATRE. Thy hands yet from my kneese
Remove, and rather me to take in armes, upon me fall
And yee O aydes of elders age, yee litle infants all,
Mee clyp and coll about the necke: this fowle attyre forsake,
And spare myne eyes that pity it, and fresher vesture take
Lyke myne to see, and you with joy, the halfe of emperie
Deere brother take: the greater prayse shall come to mee thereby,
Our fathers seate to yelde to you, and brother to releeve.
To have a kingdome is but chaunce, but vertue it to geeve.
THY. A just reward for such deserts, the Gods (O brother deare)
Repay to thee: but on my head a regall crowne to weare,
My lothsome lyfe denyes: and farre doth from the sceptor flee
My hand unhappy: in the mydst let leefull be for mee
Of men to lurke. ATRE. This kingdome can with twayne full well agree.
THY. What ever is (O brother) yours, I count it myne to bee.
ATRE. Who would dame fortunes gifts refuse, if shee him rayse to reigne?
THY. The gyfts of hir eche man it wotes, how soone they passe againe.
ATRE. Yee me depryve of glory great, except yee th' empyre take.
THY. You have your prayse in offring it, and I it to forsake.
And full perswaded to refuse the kingdome, am I still.
ATRE. Except your part yee will susteine myne owne forsake I will.
THY. I take it then, and beare I will the name thereof alone:
The ryghts and armes, as well as myne they shall be yours eche one.

ATRE. The regall crowne as you beseemes upon your head then take :
And I th' appoyncted sacrifice for Gods, will now goe make.

CHORUS

Woulde any man it weene? that cruell wight
Atreus, of mynde so impotent to see
Was soone astonied with his brothers sight,
Mo greater force then pietye may bee :
Where kynred is not, lasteth every threat,
Whom true love holdes, it holdes eternally.
The wrath but late with causes kyndled great
All favour brake, and did to battayle cry,
Whan horsemen did resounde one every syde,
The swoordes eche where, then glystred more and more :
Which raging Mars with often stroke did guide
The fresher bloud to shed yet thyrsting sore.
But love the sworde agaynst theyr wills doth swage,
And them to peace perswads with hand in hand.
So sodeyne rest, amid so great a rage
What God hath made? throughout Mycenas land
The harnesse clynkt, but late of cyvill strife :
And for their babes did fearefull mother quake,
Her armed spouse to leese much fearde the wyfe,
When sworde was made the scabberde to forsake,
That now by rest with rust was overgrowne.
Some to repayre the walles that did decay,
And some to strength the towres halfe overthrowne,
And some the gates with gyns of Yrne to stay
Full busie were, and dredfull watch by nyght
From turret high did overlooke the towne.
Woorse is then warre it selfe the feare of fight.
(Nowe are the threats of cruell sworde layde downe,
And nowe the rumour whists of battayles sowne,
The noyse of crooked trumpet silent lyes,
And quiet peace returnes to joyfull towne.
So when the waves of swelling surge aryse,

THE THIRD ACTE

Whyle Corus wynde the Brutian seas doth smight,
And Scylla soundes from hollowe Caves within,
And Shipmen are with wasting waves affright,
Charybdis casts that erst it had drunke in :
And Cyclops fierce his father yet doth dred,
In Ætna banke that fervent is with heates,
Least quenched be with waves that overshed
The fire that from eternall Fornace beates :
And poore Laërtes thinkes his kyngdomes all
May drowned be, and Ithaca doth quake :
If once the force of wyndes begin to fall,
The sea lyth downe more mylde then standing lake.
The deepe, where Ships so wyde full dredfull were
To passe, with sayles on eyther syde out spred
Now fallne adowne, the lesser Boate doth beare :
And leysure is to vewe the fyshes ded
Even there, where late with tempest bet upon
The shaken Cyclades were with Seas agast.
No state endures, the payne and pleasure, one
To other yeldes, and joyes be soonest past.
One howre sets up the thinges that lowest bee.
Hee that the crownes to prynces doth devyde,
Whom people please with bending of the knee,
And at whose becke theyr battayles lay aside
The Meades, and Indians eke to Phebus nye,
And Dakes that Parthyans doe with horsemen threat,
Him selfe yet holdes his Sceptors doubtfully,
And men of might he feares and chaunces great
(That eche estate may turne) and doubtfull howre.
O yee, whom lorde of lande and waters wyde,
Of Lyfe and death grauntes here to have the powre,
Lay yee your proude and lofty lookes aside :
What your inferiour feares of you amis,
That your superiour threats to you agayne.
To greater kyng, eche kyng a subject is.
Whom dawne of day hath seene in pryde to raygne,
Hym overthrowne hath seene the evening late.
Let none rejoyce to much that good hath got,

THE SECOND TRAGEDY

Let none dispayre of best in worst estate.
For Clotho myngles all, and suffreth not
Fortune to stande : but Fates about doth drive.
Such friendship finde wyth Gods yet no man myght,
That he the morowe might be sure to lyve.
The God our things all tost and turned quight
Rolles with a whyrle wynde.

THE FOURTHE ACTE

MESSENGER, CHORUS

HAT whirlwynde may me headlong dryve and up in ayre mee fling,
And wrap in darkest cloude, whereby it might so heynous thing,
Take from myne eyes? O wicked house that even of Pelops ought
And Tantalus abhorred bee. Ch. What new thing hast thou brought?
Me. What lande is this? lythe Sparta here and Argos, that hath bred
So wicked brethern? and the ground of Corinth lying spred
Betweene the seas? or Ister else where woont to take their flight,
Are people wylde? or that which woonts with snowe to shyne so bright
Hircana lande? or els doe here the wandring Scythians dwell?
Ch. What monstrous mischiefe is this place then guilty of? that tell,
And this declare to us at large what ever be the ill.
Me. If once my mynde may stay it selfe, and quaking limmes I will.
But yet of such a cruell deede before myne eyes the feare
And Image walkes: yee raging stormes now far from hence me beare
And to that place me drive, to which now driven is the day
Thus drawen from hence. Ch. Our myndes yee holde yet still in doubt: full stay.
Tell what it is yee so abhorre. The author thereof showe.
I aske not who, but which of them that quickly let us know.
Me. In Pelops Turret high, a part there is of Pallace wyde
That towarde the south erected leanes, of which the utter syde

With equall top to mountayne standes, and on the City lies,
And people proude agaynst theyr prynce if once the traytors rise
Hath underneath his battring stroke : there shynes the place in sight
Where woont the people to frequent, whose golden beames so bright
The noble spotted pillers gray, of marble doe supporte,
Within this place well knowen to men, where they so oft resorte,
To many other roomes about the noble court doth goe.
The privie Palaice underlieth in secret place aloe,
With ditch ful deepe that doth enclose the wood of privitee,
And hidden parts of kyngdome olde : where never grew no tree
That chereful bowes is woont to beare, with knife or lopped be,
But Tare, and Cypresse, and with tree of Holme ful blacke to see
Doth becke and bende the wood so darke : alofte above all theese
The higher oke doth over looke, surmounting all the treese.
From hens with lucke the raigne to take, accustom'd are the kyngs,
From hens in daunger ayd to aske, and doome in doubtfull things.
To this affixed are the gifts, the sounding Trumpets bright,
The Chariots broke, and spoyles of sea that now Mirtôon hight,
There hang the wheeles once won by crafte of falser axel tree,
And every other conquests note, here leeful is to see
The Phrygian tyre of Pelops head : the spoyle of enmies heere,
And of Barbarian triumphe left, the paynted gorgeous geere.
A lothsome springe stands under shade, and slouthfull course doth take,
With water blacke : even such as is : of yrkesome Stygian lake
The ugly wave whereby art wont, to sweare the gods on hye.
Here all the night the grisly ghosts and gods of death to crie
The fame reportes : with clinkyng chaynes resounds the wood ech where
The sprights cry out : and every thinge that dredfull is to heare,
May there bee seene : of ugly shapes from olde Sepulchres sent
A fearefull flocke doth wander there, and in that place frequent
Worse things then ever yet were knowwne : ye all the wood full ofte
With flame is woont to flash, and all the higher trees alofte

Without a fyre do burne : and ofte the wood beside all this
With triple barkyng roares at once : ful oft the palaice is
Affright with shapes, nor lighte of day may on the terrour quell.
Eternall night doth hold the place, and darknes there of hell
In mid day raignes : from hens to them that pray, out of the ground
The certayne answers geven are, what tyme with dredful sound
From secret place the fates be tolde, and dungeon roares within
While of the God breakes out the voyce : whereto when entred in
Fierce Atreus was, that did wyth him his brothers children trayle,
Dekt are the aulters : who (alas) may it enough bewayle ?
Behynde the infants backs anone he knyt theyr noble hands,
And eke theyr heavy heads about he bound with purple bands :
There wanted there no Frankensence, nor yet the holy wine,
Nor knyfe to cut the sacrifice, besprinkt with levens fine,
Kept is in all the order due, least such a mischiefe gret
Should not be ordred well. Ch. Who doth his hand on sword then set ?
Me. He is him selfe the priest, and he himselfe the deadly verse
With prayer dyre from fervent mouth doth syng and oft reherse.
And he at th' aulters stands himselfe, he them assygn'de to dye
Doth handle, and in order set, and to the knyfe applye,
He lights the fyres, no rights were left of sacrifice undone.
The woode then quakt, and all at once from trembling grounde anone
The Pallace beckt, in doubt which way the payse thereof woulde fall,
And shaking as in waves it stoode : from th' ayre and therewithall
A blasing starre that foulest trayne drew after him doth goe :
The wynes that in the fyres were cast, with chaunged licour floe,
And turne to bloud : and twyse or thryse th' attyre fell from his hed,
The Iverye bright in Temples seem'de to weepe and teares to shed,
The sights amas'de all other men, but stedfast yet alway
Of mynde, unmoved Atreus stands, and even the Gods doth fray
That threaten him and all delay forsaken by and by
To th' aulters turnes, and therewithall a syde he lookes awry.

THE SECOND TRAGEDY

As hungry Tygre wonts that doth in gengey woods remayne
With doubtfull pace to range and roame betweene the bullocks twayne,
Of eyther pray full covetous and yet uncertayne where
She fyrst may byte, and roaring throate now turnes the tone to teare
And then to th' other strayght returnes, and doubtfull famyne holdes :
So Atreus dyre, betwene the babes doth stand and them beholdes
On whom he poynctes to slake his yre : first slaughter where to make,
Hee doubts : or whom he shoulde agayne for second offring take,
Yet skills it nought, but yet he doubtes and such a cruelty
It him delights to order well. Ch. Whom take he fyrst to dy ?
Me. First place, least in him thinke yee might no piete to remayne
To graundsier dedicated is, fyrst Tantalus is slayne.
Ch. With what a minde and count'nesice, could the boy his death sustayne ?
Me. All careles of him selfe he stoode, nor once he would in vayne
His prayers leese. But Atreus fierce the sword in him at last
In deepe and deadly wound doth hide to hilts, and gryping fast
His throate in hand, he thrust him through. The sword then drawne away
When long the body had uphelde it selfe in doubtfull stay,
Which way to fall, at length upon the unckle downe it falles.
And then to th' aulters cruelly Philisthenes he tralles,
And on his brother throwes : and strayght his necke of cutteth hee.
The Carcase headlong falles to ground : a piteous thing to see,
The mourning head with murmure yet uncertayne doth complayne.
Chor. What after double death doth he and slaughter then of twayne ?
Spares he the Child ? or gilt on gilt agayne yet heapeth he ?
Mess. As long maynd Lyon feerce amid the wood of Armenie,
The drove pursues and conquest makes of slaughter many one,
Though now defyled be his jawes with bloud and hunger gone
Yet slaketh not his yreful rage with bloud of Bulles so great,
But slouthful now with weary tooth the lesser Calves doth threate

THE FOURTH ACTE

None other wyse doth Atreus rage, and swelles with anger straynd,
And holding now the sword in hand, with double slaughter staynd,
Regarding not where fell his rage, with cursed hand unmild
He strake it through his body quite, at bosome of the Child
The blade goeth in, and at the backe agayne out went the same,
He falles and quenching with his bloud the aulters sacred flame,
Of eyther wound at length he dieth. Chor. O heynous hateful act.
Mess. Abhorre ye this ? ye heare not yet the end of all the fact,
There followes more. Chor. A fiercer thing, or worse then this to see
Could Nature beare ? Me. Why thinke ye this of gylt the end to be ?
It is but part. Chor. What could he more ? to cruel beastes he cast
Perhappes their bodyes to be torne, and kept from fyres at last.
Me. Would God he had : that never tombe the dead might over hyde,
Nor flames dissolve, though them for food to foules in pastures wyde
He had out throwen, or them for pray to cruell beastes would flinge.
That which the worst was wont to be, were here a wished thing,
That them their father saw untombd : but oh more cursed crime
Uncredible, the which denye will men of after tyme :
From bosomes yet alive out drawne the trembling bowels shake,
The vaynes yet breath, the feareful hart doth yet both pant and quake :
But he the stringes doth turne in hand, and destenies beholde,
And of the guttes the sygnes each one doth vewe not fully cold..
When him the sacrifyce had pleasd, his diligence he puttes
To dresse his brothers banquet now : and streight a sonder cuttes
The bodyes into quarters all, and by the stoompes anone
The shoulders wyde, and brawnes of armes he strikes of everychone.
He layes abroad their naked lims, and cuts away the bones :
The onely heads he kepes and handes to him committed once.
Some of the guttes are broacht, and in the fyres that burne full sloe
They drop, the boyling licour fome doth tomble to and froe
In moorning cawderne : from the flesh that overstandes aloft
The fyre doth flye, and skatter out and into chimney ofte

Up heapt agayne, and there constraynd by force to tary yet
Unwilling burnes : the liver makes great noyse upon the spit,
Nor easely wot I, if the flesh, or flames they be that cry,
But crye they do : the fyre like pitch it fumeth by and by :
Nor yet the smoke it selfe so sad, like filthy miste in sight
Ascendeth up as wont it is, nor takes his way upright,
But even the Gods and house it doth with fylthy fume defile.
O pacient Phœbus though from hence thou backeward flee the whyle,
And in the midst of heaven above dost drowne the broken day,
Thou fleest to late : the father eats his children, well away,
And limmes to which he once gave life, with cursed jaw doth teare.
He shynes with oyntment shed ful sweete all round about his heare,
Replete with wyne : and oftentymes so cursed kynd of food
His mouth hath held, that would not downe, but yet this one thing good
In all thy yls (Thyestes) is that them thou dost not knoe,
And yet shal that not long endure, though Titan backward goe
And chariots turne agaynst himselfe, to meete the wayes he went,
And heavy night so heynous deede to kepe from sight be sent,
And out of tyme from East aryse, so foule a fact to hyde,
Yet shall the whole at length be seene : thy ylles shall all be spide

CHORUS

Which way O Prince of landes and Gods on hie,
At whose uprise eftsones of shadowd night
All beawty fleeth, which way turnst thou awrye?
And drawest the day in midst of heaven to flight?
Why dost thou (Phœbus) hide from us thy sight?
Not yet the watch that later howre bringes in,
Doth Vesper warne the Starres to kindle light.
Not yet doth turne of Hespers whele begin
To loase thy chare his well deserved way.
The trumpet third not yet hath blowen his blast
Whyle toward the night beginnes to yeld the day :
Great wonder hath of sodayne suppers hast

THE FOURTH ACTE

The Plowman yet whose Oxen are untiierd.
From woonted course of Heaven what drawes thee back?
What causes have from certayne race conspierd
To turne thy horse? do yet from dongeon black
Of hollow hell, the conquerd Gyantes prove
A fresh assaut? doth Tityus yet assay
With trenched hart, and wounded wombe to move
The former yres? or from the hil away
Hath now Typhœus wound his syde by might?
Is up to heaven the way erected hie
Of phlegrey foes by mountaynes set upright?
And now doth Ossa Pelion overlye?
The wonted turnes are gone of day and night,
The ryse of Sunne, nor fall shal be no more,
Aurora dewish mother of the light
That wontes to send the horses out before,
Doth wonder much agayne returne to see,
Her dawning light: she wots not how to ease
The weary wheeles, nor manes that smoaking be
Of horse with sweate to bathe amid the seas.
Himselfe unwonted there to lodge likewise,
Doth setting sonne agayne the morning see,
And now commaundes the darkenes up to ryse,
Before the night to come prepared bee.
About the Poale yet glowth no fyre in sight.
Nor light of Moone the shades doth comfort yet.
What so it be, God graunt it be the night.
Our hartes do quake with feare oppressed gret,
And dreadfull are least heaven and earth and all
With fatall ruine shaken shall decay:
And least on Gods agayne, and men shall fall
Disfigurde Chaos: and the land away
The Seas, and Fyres, and of the glorious Skife
The wandring lampes, least nature yet shal hide.
Now shall no more with blase of his uprise,
The Lord of starres that leades the world so wyde,
Of Sommer both and Winter geve the markes,
Nor yet the Moone with Phœbus flames that burnes,

Shall take from us by night the dreadful carkes,
With swifter course or passe her brothers turnes,
While compasse lesse the fets in croked race :
The Gods on heaps shal out of order fall,
And each with other mingled be in place.
The wryed way of holy planets all,
With path a slope that doth devide the Zones.
That beares the sygnes, and yeares in course doth brynge
Shall see the starres with him fall downe at ones.
And he that first not yet with gentle spring,
The temperate Gale doth geve to sayles, the Ramme
Shall headlong fall adowne to Seas agayne,
Through which he once with fearefull Hellen swam.
Next him the Bull that doth with horne sustayne
The systers seven with him shall overturne
The twins and armes of croked Cancer all,
The Lyon hoat that wontes the soyle to burne
Of Hercules agayne from heaven shall fall.
To landes once left the Virgin shall be throwne,
And leveld payse of balance sway alow,
And draw with them the stinging Scorpion downe.
So likewyse he that holdes in Thessale bowe
His swift wel fethred arrowes Chiron old,
Shal breake the same and eke shal lese his shotte
And Capricorne that bringes the winter cold
Shall overturne and breake the water pot
Who so thou be : and downe with thee to grounde,
The last of all the sygnes shal Pisces fall
And monsters eake in seas yet never drounde,
The water gulph shal overwhelme them all.
And he which doth betwene each ursa glyde,
Lyke croked flood the slipper serpent twynde :
And lesser Beare by greater Dragons syde,
Full cold with frost congealed hard by kinde,
And carter dull that slowly guides his waine
Unstable shall Boôtes fall from hye.
We are thought meete of all men whom agayn
Should hugy heape of Chaos overly.

And world oppresse with overturned masse
The latest age now falleth us uppon.
With evil hap we are begot alas
If wretches we have lost the sight of sonne,
Or him by fraught enforced have to flye
Let our complayntes yet goe and feare be past :
He greedy is of life, that wil not die
When all the world shall end with him at last.

THE FIFTE ACTE

ATREUS *alone*

OWE equall with the Starres I goe, beyond each other wight,
With haughty heade the heavens above, and highest Poale I smite.
The kingdome nowe, and seate I holde, where once my father raynd :
I nowe lette goe the gods : for all my wil I have obtaynde
Enoughe and well, ye even enough for me I am acquit
But why enough ? I wil procede and fyl the father yet
With bloud of his least any shame should me restrayne at all,
The day is gone, go to therfore whyle thee the heaven doth call.
Would God I could agaynst their wils yet hold the Goddes that flee
And of revenging dish constrayne them witnesses to bee :
But yet (which wel enough is wrought) let it the father see.
In spighte of al the drowned day I will remove from thee
The darknesse all, in shade wherof do lurke thy miseryes.
And guest at such a banquet now to long he careles lyes,
With mery face : now eate and drunke enough he hath at last.
T'ys best him selfe should know his ylls, ye servauntes all in hast
Undoe the temple dores : and let the house bee open all :
Fayne would I see, when loke uppon his childrens heads he shal
What countenaunce he then would make, or in what woordes break out
Would first his griefe, or how would quake his body round about
With spright amased sore : of all my worke the fruite were this
I would him not a miser see, but while so made he is,
Behold the temple opened now doth shyne with many a light :
In glitteryng gold and purple seate he sittes hymselfe upright,

And staying up his heavy head with wyne uppon his hand,
He belcheth out, now chiefe of goddes in highest place I stand,
And king of kinges : I have my wish, and more then I could thinke.
He filled is, he now the wyne in silver bolle doth drinke
And spare it not : there yet remaynes a worser draught for thee
That sprong out of the bodyes late of sacrifyces three,
Which wyne shall hyde let therwithall the boordes be taken up.
The father (mingled with the wyne) his childrens bloud shall sup,
That would have dronke of myne. Behold he now beginnes to strayne
His voyce, and synges, nor yet for joy his mynde he may refrayne.

THE SECONDE SCEANE

THIESTES *alone*

O BEATEN bosomes dullde so longe with woe,
Laie down your cares, at length your greves relent
Let sorowe passe, and all your dread let goe,
And fellow eke of fearefull banishment,
Sad povertye and ill in misery
The shame of cares, more whense thy fall thou haste,
Then whether skylles, great hap to him, from hye
That falles, it is in surety to be plast
Beneath, and great it is to him agayne
That prest with storme of evylls feeles the smart,
Of kyngedome loste the payses to sustaine
With necke unbowde nor yet detect of heart
Nor overcome, his heavy haps alwayes
To beare upright but now of carefull carkes
Shake of the showres, and of thy wretched dayes
Away with all the myserable markes.
To joyfull state returne thy chearefull face.
Put fro thy mynde the olde Thyestes hence.
It is the woont of wight in wofull case,
In state of joy to have no confidence.
Though better haps to them returned be,
Thafflicted yet to joy it yrketh sore.

Why calst thou me abacke, and hyndrest me
This happy day to celebrate ? wherefore
Bidst thou me (sorrow) wepe without a cause ?
Who doth me let with flowers so fresh and gay,
To decke my hayres ? it lets and me withdrawes.
Downe from my head the roses fall away :
My moysted haire with oyntment over all,
With sodayne mase standes up in wondrous wyse,
From face that would not weepe the streames do fall.
And howling cryes amid my wordes aryse.
My sorrowe yet thaccustomd teares doth love
And wretches stil delyght to weepe and crye.
Unpleasant playntes it pleaseth them to move :
And florisht fayre it likes with Tyrian die
Their robes to rent, to waile it likes them still
For sorrow sendes (in signe that woes draw nie)
The mind that wots before of after yll.
The sturdy stormes the shipmen over lye.
When voyd of wynd thasswaged seas do rest.
What tumult yet or countenaunce to see
Makste thou mad man ? at length a trustful breast
To brother gene, what ever now it be,
Causeles, or els to late thou art a dred.
I wretch would not so feare, but yet me drawes
A trembling terrour : downe myne eyes do shed
Their sodayne teares and yet I know no cause.
Is it a greefe, or feare ? or els hath teares great joy it selfe.

THE THIRDE SCEANE

ATREUS, THYESTES

Lette us this daye with one consente (O brother celebrate)
This daye my sceptors may confyrme, and stablish my estate,
And faythfull bonde of peace and love betwene us ratifye.
Thy. Enough with meate and eke with wyne, now satisfyed am I.

But yet of all my joyes it were a great encrease to mee,
If now about my syde I might my litle children see.
Atr. Beleeve that here even in thyne armes thy children present be.
For here they are, and shalbe here, no part of them fro thee
Sal be withhelde : their loved lookes now geve to thee I wil,
And with the heape of all his babes, the father fully fyll.
Thou shalt be glutted feare thou not : they with my boyes as yet
The joyful sacrifyces make at borde where children sit.
They shalbe cald, the frendly cup now take of curtesy
With wyne upfylde. Thy. Of brothers feast I take ful willingly
The fynal gyft, shed some to gods of this our fathers lande,
Then let the rest be dronke, what's this ? in no wyse wil my hand
Obeye : the payse increaseth sore, and downe myne arme doth sway.
And from my lippes the wasting wyne it selfe doth flye away,
And in deceived mouth, about my jawes it runneth rounde.
The table to, it selfe doth shake and leape from trembling ground.
Scant burnes the fyre : the ayre it selfe with heavy chere to sight
Forsooke of sonne amased is betweene the day and night.
What meaneth this ? yet more and more of backward beaten skye
The compas falles, and thicker myst the world doth overly
Then blackest darkenes, and the night in night it selfe doth hyde.
All starres be fled, what so it bee my brother God provyde
And soones to spare : the Gods so graunt that all this tempest fall
On this vyle head : but now restore to me my children all.
Atr. I wil, and never day agayne shal them from thee withdraw.
Thy. What tumult tumbleth so my guttes, and doth my bowels gnaw ?
What quakes within ? with heavy payse I feele my selfe opprest,
And with an other voyce then myne bewayles my doleful brest :
Come nere my sonnes, for you now doth thunhappy father call :
Come nere, for you once seene, this griefe would soone asswage and fall.
Whence murmure they ? Atr. With fathers armes embrace them quickly now
For here they are loe come to thee : dost thou thy children know ?
Thy. I know my brother : such a gylt yet canst thou suffer well
O earth to beare ? nor yet from hence to Stygian lake of hell

Dost thou both browne thy selfe and us ? nor yet with broaken ground
Dost thou these kingdomes and their king with Chaos rude confounde ?
Nor yet uprenting from the soyle the bowres of wicked land,
Dost thou Micenas overturne with Tantalus to stand,
And aunciters of ours, if there in hel be any one,
Now ought we both : now from the frames on eyther syde anone
Of ground, all here and there rent up out of thy bosome depe :
Thy dens and dungeons set abrode, and us enclosed keepe,
In bottome low of Acheront above our heds aloft
Let wander all the gylty ghostes, with burning frete ful oft
Let fyry Phlegethon that drives his sands both to and fro
To our confusion overroon and vyolently flow.
O slothful soyle unshaken payse unmoved yet art thou ?
The Gods are fled. Atr. But take to thee with joy thy children now,
And rather them embrace : at length thy children all of thee
So long wisht for (for no delay there standeth now in mee)
Enjoy and kisse embracing armes devyde thou unto three.
Thy. Is this thy league ? may this thy love and fayth of brother bee ?
And doost thou so repose thy hate ? the father doth not crave
His sonnes alive (which might have bene without thy gylt) to have
And eke without thy hate, but this doth brother brother pray :
That them he may entoombe restore, whom see thou shalt strayght waye,
Be burnt : the father naught requires of thee that have he shall,
But soone forgoe. Atr. What ever part yet of thy children all
Remaynes, here shalt thou have : and what remayneth not thou hast.
Thy. Lye they in fieldes, a food out flong for fleeyng fowles to wast ?
Or are they kept a pray, for wyld and brutish beastes to eate ?
Atr. Thou hast devourd thy sonnes and fyld thy selfe with wicked meat.
Thy. Oh this is it that sham'de the Gods and day from hence did dryve
Turn'd back to east, alas I wretch what waylinges may I geve ?

Or what complayntes ? what woeful woordes may be enough for mee ?
Their heads cut of, and handes of torne, I from their bodyes see,
And wretched feete from broken thighes I here behold agayn
Tys this that greedy father could not suffer to sustayne.
In belly roll my bowels round, and cloased cryme so great
Without a passage stryves within and seekes away to get.
Thy sword (O brother) lend to me much of my bloud alas
It hath : let us therwith make way for all my sonnes to passe.
Is yet the sword from me withheld ? thy selfe thy bosoms teare,
And let thy brestes resound with stroakes : yet wretch thy hand forbeare
And spare the deade : who ever saw such mischiefe put in proofe ?
What rude Heniochus that dwels by ragged coast aloofe,
Of Caucasus unapt for men ? or feare to Athens, who
Procustes wyld ? the father I oppress my children do
And am opprest, is any meane of gylt or mischiefe yet ?
Atr. I meane in mischiefe ought to be when gylt thou dost commit,
Not when thou quytst : for yet even this to litle seemes to me.
The blood yet warme even from the wound I should in sight of thee
Even in thy jawes have shed, that thou the bloud of them mightst drinke
That lyved yet : but whyle to much to hast my hate I thinke
My wrath beguyled is my selfe with sword the woundes them gave
I strake them downe, the sacred fyres with slaughter vowde I have
Wel pleasd, the carcase cutting then, and liveles lymmes on grounde.
I have in litle parcels chopt, and some of them I drounde
In boyling cauderns, some to fyres that burnte ful slow I put,
And made to droppes their synewes all, and limmes a two I cut
Even yet alyve and on the spitte, that thrust was through the same
I harde the liver wayle and crye, and with my hand the flame
I oft kept in : but every whit the father might of this
Have better done, but now my wrath so lightly ended is.
He rent his sonnes with wicked gumme, himselfe yet wotting naught,
Nor they therof. Thy. O ye encloas'd with bending bankes abought
All seas me heare, and to this gylt ye Gods now harken well
What ever place ye fled are to here all ye sprites of hel,

And here ye landes, and night so darke that them dost overly
With clowde so blacke: to my complayntes do thou thy selfe apply.
To thee now left I am, thou dost alone me miser see,
And thou art left without thy starres: I wil not make for me
Peticions yet, nor ought for me require may ought yet bee
That me should vayle? for you shal all my wishes now foresee.
Thou guyder great of skyes above, and prince of highest might,
Of heavenly place now all with cloudes ful horrible to sight,
Enwrap the worlde, and let the wyndes on every syde breake out:
And send the dredfull thunderclap through al the world about
Not with what hand thou gyltles house and undeserved wall
With lesser bolt are wonte to beate, but with the which did fall
The three unheaped mountaynes once and which to hils in height
Stoode equall up, the gyantes huge: throuw out such weapons streight,
And flyng thy fires: and therwithall revenge the drowned day.
Let flee thy flames, the light thus lost and hid from heaven away,
With flashes fyll: the cause (lest long thou shouldst doubte whom to hit)
Of ech of us is ill: if not at least let myne be it.
Me strike with tryple edged toole thy brande of flaminge fyre
Beate through this breast: if father I my children do desyre
To lay in tombe or corpses cast to fyre as doth behove,
I must be burnt if nothing now the gods to wrath may move,
Nor powre from skies with thunderbolt none strikes the wicked men
Let yet eternall night remayne, and hyde with darknes then
The world about: I Titan naught complayne as now it standes,
If stil thou hyde thee thus away. Atr. Now prayse I well my handes,
Now got I have the palme. I had bene overcome of thee,
Except thou sorrow'dst so but now even children borne to mee
I compt and now of bridebed chast the fayth I do repayre.
Thy. In what offended have my sons: Atr. In that, that thyne they were.
Thy. Setst thou the sonnes for fathers foode? Atr. I do and (which is best)
The certayne sonnes. Thy. The gods that guyde all infantes I protest.

Atr. What wedlock gods ? Thy. Who would the gilt with gylt so quite again ?
Atr. I know thy greefe prevented now with wrong thou dost complayne :
Nor this thee yrkes, that fed thou art with food of cursed kind,
But that thou hadst not it prepard for so it was thy mynd,
Such meates as these to set before thy brother wotting naught,
And by the mothers helpe to have likewyse my children caught :
And them with such like to slay : this one thing letted thee,
Thou thought'st them thine. Thy. The gods shall al of this revengers be
And unto them for vengeance due my vowes thee render shall.
Atr. But vext to be I thee the whyle, geeve to thy children all.

THE FOURTH SCENE

Added to the Tragedy by the Translatour

THYESTES *alone*

O Kyng of Dytis dungeon darke, and grysly Ghosts of hell,
That in the deepe and dredfull Denne, of blackest Tartare dwell.
Where leane and pale dyseases lye, where feare and famyne are,
Where discord stands with bleeding browes, where every kynde of care,
Where furies fight in beds of steele, and heares of crauling snakes,
Where Gorgon grimme, where Harpyes are, and lothsome Lymbo lakes,
Where most prodigious ugly thinges, the hollowe hell doth hyde,
If yet a monster more myshapt then all that there doe byde,
That makes his broode his cursed foode, yee all abhorre to see,
Nor yet the deepe Averne it selfe, may byde to cover mee,
Nor grisly gates of Putoes place, yet dare them selves to spred,
Nor gaping grounde to swallowe him, whom Gods and day have fled :
Yet breake yee out from cursed seates, and heere remayne with mee,
Yee neede not now to be affrayde, the Ayre and Heaven to see.

Nor triple headed Cerberus, thou needst not bee affryght,
The day unknowne to thee to see or els the lothsome lyght.
They both be fled : and now doth dwell none other count'naunce heere,
Then doth beneath the fowlest face, of hatefull hell appeere.
Come see a meetest match for thee, a more then monstrous wombe,
That is of his unhappy broode, become a cursed tombe.
Flocke here yee fowlest fiendes of hell, and thou O graundsyre greate,
Come see the glutted guts of myne, with such a kinde of meate,
As thou didst once for Gods prepare. Let torments all of hel
Now fall uppon this hatefull head, that hath deservde them well.
Yee all be plagued wrongfully, your guiltes be small, in sight
Of myne, and meete it were your pange on me alone should light.
Now thou O graundsier guiltlesse arte, and meeter were for mee,
With fleeing floud to be beguilde, and fruite of fickle tree.
Thou slewst thy sonne, but I my sonnes, alas, have made my meate.
I coulde thy famyne better beare, my paunch is now repleate
With foode : and with my children three, my belly is extent.
O filthy fowles and gnawyng gripes, that Tytius bosome rent
Beholde a fitter pray for you, to fill your selves uppone
Then are the growing guts of him : foure wombes enwrapt in one
This paunche at once shall fill you all : if yee abhorre the foode,
Nor may your selves abide to bathe, in such a cursed bloode :
Yet lend to me your clinching clawes, your pray a while forbeare,
And with your tallons suffer mee, this monstrous mawe to teare.
Or whirling wheeles, with swinge of which Ixion still is rolde,
Your hookes upon this glutted gorge, would catche a surer holde.
Thou filthy floud of Lymbo lake, and Stygian poole so dyre,
From choaked chanell belche abrode, Thou fearefull freate of fyre,
Spue out thy flames O Phlegethon : and overshed the grounde.
With vomit of thy fyry streame, let me and earth be drownde,
Breake up thou soyle from bottome deepe, and geve thou roome to hell,
That night, where day, the ghosts, where Gods were woont to raigne, may dwel.
Why gapst thou not ? Why do you not O gates of hell unfolde ?
Why do yee thus thinfernall fiendes, so long from hence withholde ?

Are you likewyse affrayde to see, and knowe so wretched wight,
From whom the Gods have wryde theyr lookes, and turned are to flight ?
O hatefull head, whom heaven and hell, have shoonde and left alone,
The Sunne, the starres, the light, the day, the Gods, the ghosts be gone.
Yet turne agayne yee Skyes a while, ere quight yee goe fro mee,
Take vengeance fyrst on him, whose faulte enforceth you to flee.
If needes yee must your flight prepare, and may no longer bide,
But rolle yee must with you forthwith, the Gods and Sunne a syde,
Yet slowly flee : that I at length, may you yet overtake,
While wandring wayes I after you, and speedy jorney make.
By seas, by lands, by woods, by rocks, in darke I wonder shall :
And on your wrath, for right rewarde to due deserts, will call.
Yee scape not fro me, so yee Gods, still after you I goe,
And vengeaunce aske on wicked wight, your thunder bolte to throe.

FINIS

THE
THYRD TRAGEDY OF L. ANNAEUS SENECA
ENTITULED THEBAIS

TRANSLATED OUT OF LATIN INTO ENGLISHE
BY THOMAS NEWTON
1581

THE ARGUMENT

Laius King of Thebes, hadde by his Wyfe and Queene Jocasta, a Sonne named Oedipus: Who being yet in his Mothers Wombe, Apollo his Oracle pronounced, that by the handes of that childe, King Laius the father should bee murthered. The feare whereof caused the King to commaund him to be put to death. The Kinges heardman, who had the charge to see this done, on thone side mooved with compassion over a tender weakeling: and on the other side, afraid to incurre the King his maisters displeasure, contented himselfe onely to boare two hoales through the Infants two feete, and with certayne plyable Twigges beinge thrust through the same, hong him up on a tree by the Heeles: supposing that heereby hee should commit a lesse crime in suffring the childe to perishe by famine, then in playing the Butcher himselfe. It fortuned, that one Phorbas heardman to Polybius King of Corynth, passing by that way and hearing a yong Childe crye, went and cut him downe, and caryinge him to Corynth, it so fell out that at length hee was given for a present or gyft to Merope, Wyfe to the said King Polybus. This Oedipus afterward going to Thebes, in a certayne sedicious hurly burly in the countrey there, unawares and unwitting slewe King Laius his Father. About which tyme the City of Thebes, and Countrey there about was mervelously infested with a monster called Sphinx: who propounding a certaine Riddle, or obscure question to such as passed that way, and devouringe as many, as coulde not assoyle the same. To him that coulde assoile it, and so rid the Countrey from that so ugly and daungerous a monster, the mariage of Queene Jocasta, and the kingdome of Thebes was promysed as a recompence: Oedipus after many others, taking the matter in hand, assoyled the Ryddle, and slew the monster. Whereupon marying the Queene, not knowing her to bee his owne Mother, had by her foure Chyldren: Etheocles, Polynices, Antigone, and Ismene.

In the end, having knowledge, how first hee had kylled his Father, and then incestuously maryed his Mother, hee forsooke his kingdome being continually infested wyth the plague, and (as one ashamed to loke any man in the face) pulled out his own Eyes, and hid himselfe in corners and solitary places. His Sonnes Etheocles and Polynices agreed to raigne enterchaungeably, that is to wit, Etheocles, one yeare, and Polynices the other. Etheocles having raigned his yeare, refused according to the articles of agrement, to resigne the Crowne to his brother for the next yeare. Whereupon they fel to mortal warres, and in the end meaning by combat to ende the matter, they mutually slew one the other. And note that this Tragedy, was left by the Authour unperfect, because it neyther hath in it, Chorus, ne yet the fifth Acte.

THE NAMES OF THE SPEAKERS

ŒDIPUS.
NUNTIUS.
ANTIGONE.
JOCASTA.

SENECA HIS TENNE TRAGEDIES

THE FIRST ACTE

ŒDIPUS, ANTIGONE

EARE Daughter, unto Father blynde a Staffe of steady stay,
To weary Syre, a comfort greate, and Guide in all his way :
And whom to have begotten, I may glad and joyfull bee :
Yet leave me now, thy haplesse Syre, thus plungde in misery.
Why seekst thou meanes, still to direct my stalking steppes aright ?
Let mee I pray thee headlong slyde in breaknecke tumbling plight.
I better shall and sooner fynde a way my selfe alone
To rid mee out of all the thrall wherein I now am throwne.
Whereby both heaven shall eased bee, and earth shall want the sight
Of mee vile wretch, whom guilt hath made a most abhorred wight.
Alas, what litle triffling tricke hath hitherto bene wrought
By these my hands ? what feate of worth or maistry have I sought ?
In deede, they have me helpt to pull myne eyes out of my head :
So that ne Sunne, ne Moone I see, but life in darknesse lead.
And though that I can nothing see, yet is my guilt and cryme
Both seene and knowne, and poyncted at, (woe worth the cursed tyme,)
Leave of thy hold, let lose thy hand, good daughter, let mee goe :
Let foultring foote light where it will, let it (this once) be so.
Ile trudge, and runne, Ile skudde, and raunge, Ile hasten to the hill
Of craggy stiepe Cytheron, there I hope to worke my will.
Where earst Acteon lost his lyfe by straunge, and uncouth death,
Whom bawling Dogges, and hunting Hounds bereft of vitall breath :

Where once Agave (bedlemitke) raunged up and downe the woode THE FIRST
With Systers hers, enspired all with Bacchus raging moode. ACTE
And pleasing well her selfe in that her fact and mischiefe donne,
Pitcht on a Poale the grisly head of him that was her Sonne.
Where Zethus with his ruffling Crew of Gallantes young and stoute
Dragd, hald, and puld, the hateful corps of Dirce, all aboute.
Where bushie bloudied brambles show which way the Bull her drew :
Nere where dame Ino from a Rocke her selfe in Sea downe threw.
So that poore mother though she ment t' avoyde one fault by flight :
Yet she therby a worse procur'd, while like a seely wight
She both her selfe and eke her sonne from Scyron hurled downe
Entending both her selfe and him in foaming Sea to drowne.
Oh happy, yea thryse happy they, that had so good an hap :
And whom such mothers pitiful earst dandled in theyr lap.
Yea yet there is in these same woods an other place to mee
Thats due by right, and rightly may me challenge as his fee.
Where I an Infant out was layed, at Fortunes to abide :
I thyther wil direct my course to try what may betyde.
Ile neither stop ne stay til that I be arryved there,
For guyde I recke not, neyther force for Stumbling any where.
Why stay I thus like dastard drudge to hasten unto it ?
Sith wel I know it lotted is to be my grave and Pit ?
Let me myne owne Cytheron mount enjoy in quiet state,
It is myne old and auncient bower, appoynted me by fate.
I pray thee be not discontent that I should (aged) die,
Even there, where life I should have lost in pueling infancy.
I yeild me heere with willing hart unto those tortures all
That earst to me were due, and which to others have befall :
To thee I speake O bloudy mount, fierce, cruel, slyepe and fell,
As well in that thou sparest some, as that thou some dost quell.
This carion corps, this sinful soule, this carcasse here of myne
Long tyme agone by right good Law and propertye is thine.
Now yet at length perfourme the hest that earst enjoyned was
To thee by those my parentes both, now bring their doome to passe.
My hart even longeth till I may so fully satisfy
By this my death that their decree, that glad I am to die.

Ah Daughter, Daughter, why wouldst thou thus keepe mee gaynst my mynd ?
In this so vile incestuous love ? thou art but now to kind.
Oh stay me not I thee desire, behold, behold, I heare
My Fathers ghost to bidde me come apace, and not to feare.
O Father myne I come, I come, now father ceasse thy rage :
I know (alas) how I abus'd my Fathers hoary age :
Who had to name King Laius : how hee doth fret and frye
To see such lewd disparagement : and none to blame but I.
Wherby the Crowne usurped is, and he by murther slayne.
And Bastardly incestuous broode in Kingly throne remayne.
And loe, dost thou not playnly see, how he my panting Ghost
With raking pawes doth hale and pull, which grieves my conscience most ?
Dost thou not see how he my face bescratcheth tyrant wyse ?
Tel mee (my Daughter) hast thou seene Ghostes in such griesly guyse ?
Antig. I see and marke each thing ful well. Good father leave this mind,
And take a better if you can : from this your selfe unwynd.
Œd. O what a beastly cowardise is in this breast of myne ?
Was I so stout and venturous in pulling out myne Eyen ?
And shall all courage be employd agaynst one onely part
Of Body, and from other partes shall valour wholly start ?
Let none of all these puling trickes nor any faint excuse
Thus daunt thy sprites, let no delay to basenes thee enduce :
Dispatch at once, why lingre I, as one thats loth to dye ?
Why live I ? ist because I can no longer mischieves trye ?
Yes that I can, wretch though I be : and therfore tel I thee,
Deare Daughter, that the sooner thou mightst hence depart from mee.
Depart a mayd and Virgin hence, for feare of afterclaps :
Since villany to Mother shewde, its good to doubt mishaps.
Antig. No force, no power, no violence, shall make me to withdraw
My duty unto thee my Syre, to whom I vow myne awe.
I will not be dissevered, ne pulled from thy syde
I will assist thee, whyle that breath shal in this Breast abyde.

My Brothers twayne let them contend, and fight for Princelye swaye THE FIRST ACTE
Of wealthy Thebes : where whilom raignd King Labdacke many a day.
The greatest share and portion that I do loke to have
Out of my Fathers Kingdome, is my Fathers lyfe to save.
Him neither shall Etheocles my elder brother take
Away from mee, who now by force the Thebane realme doth rake.
Ne Polynices, who as now is Mustring men apace
From Argos Land : with ful entent his brother to displace.
No, though the world went all on wheeles : though Jove should from above
Hurle flashing flakes upon the Earth, all shall not quayle my love.
No, though his thumping thunderbolt (when wee togeather stand)
Should light betweene us, where as we are plighted hand in hand)
Yet wil I never thee forsake, but hold my handfast still :
Therefore its booteles father deare, to countermaund my will
In this my full resolved mynd. Forbid me if you please,
But surely I will be your guide in weale, woe, dole, and ease.
And maugre al your sharpe reprofes (though much against your mind)
I wil direct your steppes and gate, that you your way may fynd :
Through thick and thinne, through rough and smoth I wil be at an ynch
In hill and dale, in wood and grove, Ile serve at ev'ry pinch.
If that you goe where daunger lies, and seeke your owne annoy,
You shall wel prove, that I to leade the daunce wil not be coy.
Advyse your selfe therfore, of twayne to which I guyde shall be :
My count is cast, I am ful bent with you to live and die.
Without me perish can you not : but with me, wel you may,
It booteth not, in other sort to move me ought to saye.
Here is an huyge Promontory that elboes into Sea
Let us from thence throw downe our selves, and worke our last decay,
If that ye wil. Here also is a flinty Rocke besyde,
Which if you please shal serve our turnes : Heere beaten with the tyde

Bee craggy Cliffes, let 's goe to them : Here runnes a gulphy streame
With force afore it dryving stones as bigge as mountaine beame.
What say you ? shall wee drench our selves within this fomy Flood ?
Goe where you wil, take which you list, do as you deeme it good.
Conditionally that I may first receyve the wound of death :
I recke no whit, I ready stand to yeld up vitall breath.
I neyther draw you to nor froe : but even as best you thinke
So doe, so deale. Would you so fayne Deathes bitter cup to drinke ?
My lord and Father, take you death so greate a boone to bee ?
If that you dye (this I assure) die first you shall me see.
If life in shew more pleasaunt seme, if so you rather chuse,
I am to wayte upon you still and never wil refuse.
But chaunge this mynde wherein you rest, take hart a grace, and show
The noble magnanimity that earst in you did flow :
Resist these panges, subdue these dumpes by valour of the mynd,
Let manly courage qualify these your affections blynd.
Tis great dishonor thus to yeeld your selfe to dolor thrall,
No storme of adverse hap thus ought a Princes hart t' appall.
Œd. This geare surmounteth far the reach of my capacity :
I am astonn'd, I feele my selfe rapt with an extasie,
Is this not wonder of so lewd, and of so curst a tree
Such fruite to grow ? of graceles Syre so good a child to see ?
Is it not straunge that in a house distaynd in villany
Such noble shew of towardnes and vertuous gyftes should lye ?
Let me some speach to thee direct, dame Fortune : how haps this
That here my daughter so unlike to wretched father is ?
Degenerating from his steps, and with such vertue fraught,
As in her Fathers cursed house she never yet was taught ?
Is it (I pray thee) credible, that out of me should spring
Such Yssue, as should geven be to any honest thinge ?
No truely, no : it cannot bee (my fates ful wel I know)
None such, (unlesse to doe me scath and mischiefe) would be so.
T' encrease the heape of myne annoy no straunge effect shall want :
Dame Nature in her Creatures wil new effectes emplant.

The Ryver shall returne his course to Fountayne backe agayne,
Dan Phœbus Lamp shall bring the Night, and Night shal day remain,
So that my grievous miseryes with surplusage may grow,
But be as tis : I for a whyle wil play my part also,
And shew some sparke of piety, my fault to countervayle :
With murtdrous knife, my woeful dayes to end I wil not fayle,
The onely helpe for Oedipus, the onely safety is
To ridde himselfe, and so redeeme that Hellish fact of his.
Let mee take vengeance on my selfe for wronges to father donne,
Whose Death is yet unexpiate, by mee his cursed sonne.
Why dost thou shake and tremble thus thou hand, not good for ought ?
Why staggrest thou to stabbe him in, who Syre to spoyle hath brought ?
That punishment which hetherto by pulling out myne eyes
Thou hast inflicted on me, is but as a sacrifyce,
Or guerdon due for villany which I committed have
With mother-myne. Now Daughter stoute, leave of pretences brave,
Alledge no gloses : but with speede let goe thy Fathers hand :
Thou mak'st me die a lingring death within this loathed land.
Thou thinkst I am alive, but I am dead long while agoe :
To this my hateful Corps at length the rytes of Buriall show.
Thou meanest well, (I know) but yet therin thou dost offend :
Though colour for thy piety I see thou dost pretend.
But piety it canot be, to dragge thus up and downe
Thy Fathers Corpes unburied through City, Field, and Towne.
For hee that doth enforce a man agaynst his will to dye :
And he that stayeth him that would fayne dye, most willingly,
Are both alike in equall fault, and stand in egallt plight.
To hinder one that would be dead is murthring him outright.
Yet not so great as thother is. I would be more content
To have my death commaunded me, then from me to be bent.
Desist from this thy purpose (Mayd) my lyfe and death both are
To dispose at my liberty, with choyse to spill or spare,
I willingly resignd the Crowne of Thebane soyle : yet I
Do still retaine upon my selfe the entyre Soveraygntye.

If I may make accompt of thee as of a trusty feere,
And true compagnion at assayes : deliver even heere
Into thy Fathers hand a Sweard : but tell me, dost thou reach
The Sword embrewd in fathers bloud, wherewith my sonnes empeach
The course of Law, possessing it and kingdome all by force ?
Where so it is, doubt is there none, but cleane without remorse
There bee the Floudgates opned wyde, to al licencious lust,
And thriftlesse trades : I al my clayme therein do rake in dust,
And cleane forsake. Let both my Sonnes by Legacy enjoy
The same, wherewith they surely shall contrive no smal annoy.
For mee pyle rather up a stacke of wood set all on fyre,
That I therein may thrust my selfe : that is my chiefe desyre :
And make an end at once of all this carrion Carkasse vyle.
Where is the surging wavous Sea ? why stay I all this whyle ?
Bring mee to some stiepe breaknecke fall : bring me where Ismene
flood
With swift and horned course doth runne, bring me wheras my
blood
With goaryng push of savage beastes may out be let at once.
To some Gulfe bring me, where the fall and tide may crush my
Bones.
If needes thou wilt my guyde remayne, as oft thou dost me tell,
Bring me that am dispos'd to dye, where Sphinx that Monster fell
With double shape apposed them that passed by the way,
Propounding Riddles intricate, and after did them slay.
There would I bee, that place I seeke : thy Father thyther bring
Into that Monsters Cabin dire thy Monstrous Father fling.
That though that Monster be dispatcht, the place may bee supplyde
With one as badde or worse then hee : there wil I farre and wyde
In tearmes obscure report and tell my heavy lucklesse lot,
The misteries whereof the hearers understandeth not.
Geve eare to that which I shal speake, marke thou Assyrian borne,
Consider this thou Thebane, where Duke Cadmus men were torne
And slayne in wood by Serpentes rage : where Dirce seely trull
In humble sort at Aulter lies : advert my tale at full
Thou, that in Lacedæmon dwelles, and honorst Castors grace,
And Pollux eake, two brethren twynnes. Fynd out this doubtful
case.

THEBAIS

Or thou that dwelst in Elis towne or by Parnassus hill,
Or thou that till'st Bæotia ground, there reaping gayne at wil.
Hearke, listen well, and flatly say, if ever heretofore
That murdrous monster Sphinx of Thebes that men in peeces tore,
In all his riddles askt the like, or of so straunge a sort ?
Or whether so insolubly his termes he cold report ?
The Sonne in Law to Graundfather, the Rival of his Syre :
The Brother of his litle Babes : to Brethren, father dire :
The Graundmother at every byrth to Husband (graceles Elfe)
Brought forth a Sonne or Daughter, which was Nephew to her selfe
How say you Syrs, in Ryddle darke, who hath so good insight,
That able is the sense hereof t' unfold and tell aryght ?
As for my selfe, although the Sphinx I whylome put to foyle :
Yet myne owne heavy destenie I scarcely can assoyle.
Why dost thou (Daughter) labour loose in usyng further speech ?
To alter this my stony hart why dost thou mee beseech ?
I tell thee playne, I fully meane this bloud of myne to spill,
That long with Death hath struggling kept : and thereupon I will
Descend to darke infernall Lake : for this same darknes blynd
Of both myne eyes is nothing such, as fact of myne should fynd.
It were my Blisse to bee in Hell in deepest dungeon fast :
Now that which should long since have bene, I wil perfourme at last.
I cannot be debard from Death : wilt thou deny me glave
Or Sword, or knife ? wilt thou no toole for mischiefe let me have ?
Wilt thou both watch and ward each way, where daunger lies in wayte ?
Shall such a sinful Caytife wretch as I, be kept so straite ?
Wilt thou not suffer me with Coard to breake my hatefull Necke ?
Canst thou kepe mee from poysonous herbes ? hast thou them al at beck ?
What shall it thee prevayle to take for mee such earnest care ?
Death ech where is : and wayes to death in thousand corners are.
Herein hath God good order tane, that every selie Foe,
May take away an others life : but Death hee cannot so.
I seeke not anye toole to have : this desprate mynd of myne
Can use the service of my hand, my threede of lyfe t' untwine.

Now hand, thy maister at a pinch assist to worke his feate,
Helpe him with all thy power and strength, t' exployt his purpose great.
I poynt thee not in this my Corps unto one place alone :
Alas, each part of me with guilt is plaunch and overgrowne.
In which soever part thou wilt, thy Massacre beginne,
And seeke to bring me to my death which way thou mayst it winne.
In pieces crush this body all, this hart that harbors sinne
Pluck out, out all my entrailes pull, proceede, and never linne
To gash and cut my wezand pype. My vaynes asonder scratch,
And make the Bloud come spowting out, or use that other match,
Which heretofore thou used haste : digge where myne eyes earst stood :
And let these woundes gush out apace much mattry filth and blood.
Hale out of mee this loathed soule that is so hard and stout :
And thou deare father Laius stand up and looke about :
Behold where ever that thou standst : I Umpyre doe the make,
And eyed Judge of all my plagues that justly heere I take.
My fact so lewde, so horrible, so loathsome to bee tolde
I never thought with any pryce or tormentes manifolde
Could have full expiation : ne thought I it inough
To die this death : or in one part to be beslashed through.
By piecemeale I am well content to suffer tormentes all
And even by piecemeale for to die : for plagues to plague mee call,
Exact the punishment that 's due : I heere most ready stand
To satisfie with any death that law and righte hath scand.
My former smartes, when as mine eyes I raked out with pawes,
Were but as tastes of sacrifice, somewhat to helpe my cause.
Come therefore (Father) neare to mee, and thrust this hand of myne
More nearer into every wound. It swerv'de and did decline
For feare, when first it tooke th' assay mine eyes to ransacke out.
I beare it still in memory, my eyes then star'de about
And seemed to disswade the hand from doing of the charge
Whereto it was enjoyned tho, and had Commission large.
Thou shalt well thinke that Œdipus dissembleth not a whit
But what his word hath warranted, his deede hath firmely quit.

Thy stoutnes then was not so great when eyes thou pulledst out THE FIRST
As was thy manhoode, when thou threwst them from thee round ACTE
about.
Now, by those Eyeholes thrust thy hand into the very braine :
That part where death attempted was, let death be sought againe.
AN. Undaunted Prynce, most noble Syre, with humble mynde I sue
That I your Daughter may be bolde to use some speech to you :
And that you would with patience digest my poore advise :
My suite is not to draw your minde to thinges, that earst in price
You highly held, ne to the view of glittring Pallace olde,
Ne bravery of your noble Realme, scarce able to bee tolde :
But that you would these yrefull fittes, by tract of time now quailde,
With patient minde sustayne and beare : this vertue never faylde
In any Prynce of such a spright as in your noble Grace
Appeareth bryght : it fitteth not that such should once abase
Themselves as thralles to Sorrowes checke, or once the conquest
yeelde
To adverse hap : or courage loose lyke dastardes in the fielde.
It is no prayse, syr, though perhappes you so your reckening cast
To make of lyfe so small accoumpt, and thus to bee agast
At every wagging of a leafe, and combersome myschaunce :
No, no, tis vertue in such case high courage to advaunce.
And when thinges are at worst, to shew true magnanimitie :
Not lyke a Meycocke, cowardly at eche alarme to flee.
Hee that hath tride all fortunes spight and worldly wealth despisde,
And constantly hath borne all bruntes that are to be devisde,
Mee thinks no cause hath, why he needes to ende his breathing
dayes
Or wish himselfe in grave : for why, starcke cravens use such wayes.
But as for him thats drencht in dole and wrapt in carking care,
Whose pensive plight can be no worse, nor tast of sowrer fare,
That man hath cause well pleasde to be : sith hee in safety standes,
And pykes hath past, and now is free from feare of further bandes.
Put case the Gods would weave the webbe of further woe to thee,
What more can any of them doe thy grieves to amplifie ?
Nay, thou thy selfe, (although thou wouldst) canst adde thereto no
more,
Unlesse thou thinke thy selfe to have deserved death therefore.

And yet, thou arte not worthy death : my reason is, because
Through ignoraunce thou didst a fact contrary to the lawes.
And therefore Father thinke your selfe most guiltlesse in the case,
And (maugre Gods) stand on your guarde, my counsell sound embrace :
For doubtlesse you an innocent are deem'de and thought to bee,
And are in deede : what makes you thus in dumpes and dolefull glee ?
What cause so great should so enchaunt your conscience, and your wits,
To seeke your owne decay and spoyle ? what meane faint hearted fits ?
That thus in hast you would so faine abandon this your lyfe
And goe to hell, where torment dwelles and grisly ghostes be ryfe.
You would not see Sun, Moone, ne Starre : no more you can : your eyes
Are blynd : you faine would leave your Court, and Countries miseries.
Why so you may, and so you doe. These all are put to sacke,
That now alyve, aswell as dead you feele of these the lacke.
You flee from Mother, Wyfe, and Chylde, you see no man alyve :
What more can death dispatch away but life doth now deprive ?
Your lords, your knights, your courtly traine, your kingly state and crowne
Your graund Affaires, your waighty charge is gone and brought adowne.
From whom, from what, do you thus flee. Œd. From none but from my selfe
Who have a breast full fraught with guilte : who, wretched caitiffe Elfe
Have all embrude my hands with blood. From these apace I flee
And from the heavens and Gods therein : and from that villanie
Which I most wicked wretch have wrought. Shall I treade on thys ground ?
Or am I worthy so to doe, in whom such trickes abound ?
Am I to have the benefite of any Element ?
Of Ayre for breath, of water moyst, or Earth for nourishment ?
O Slave forlorne, O beastly wretch, O Incestmonger vyle,
O Varlet most detestable, O Paysaunte full of guile.

Why doe I with polluted Fyst, and bloudy pawes presume
To touch thy chast and comely hand ? I foame, I fret, I fume
In hearing any speake to mee. Ought I heare any tell
Or once of Sonne or Father speake, syth I did Father quell ?
Would God it were within my power my Senses all to stop,
Would God I could these Eares of myne, even by the stumps to crop.
If that might bee, then (daughter) I should not have heard thy voyce.
I, I thy Syre, that thee begot by most incestuous choise.
Beegetting of thee, makes my crymes moe then they were before :
Remorse thereof doth gnaw and grype my conscience more and more.
Ofttymes that which myne Eyes not see, with Eares that doe I heare,
And of my Facts afore time done the inward wound I beare.
Why is there stay made of my doome ? Why am I spard so long ?
Why is not this blind head of myne throwne damned ghosts among ?
Why rest I on the Earth, and not among infernall Sprightes ?
Why pester I the company of any mortall Wightes ?
What myschiefe is there more behind ? to aggravate my care ?
My Kingdome, Parents, Children, Wit and Vertue quayled are
By sturdy stormes of froward Fate : nothing remaynde but teares,
And they bee dryde, and Eyes be gon : my hardned heart forbeares
Such signes of grace : leave of therefore, and make no more adoe :
A minde so mated with dispayre no suytes will stowpe unto.
I practize some straunge punishments agreeing to my deede :
But what proportion can bee found of plagues unto my meede ?
Whose Fortune ever was so bad ? I was no sooner borne,
But seely Infant Judged I was in peeces to be torne.
My mother in whose wombe I lay, forth had not mee yet brought
And yet even then I feared was : and straight my death was sought.
Some Babes soone after they bee borne, by stroke of death depart :
But I poore soule, before my byrth adjudged was to dart
Of death : some yet in Mothers wombe, ere any light they see
Doe taste the dint of hasty Fate, while Innocents they bee.
Apollo by his Oracle pronounced sentence dyre
Upon mee being yet unborne, that I unto my Syre

Should beastly parricide commit : and thereupon was I
Condemned straight by Fathers doome. My feete were by and by
Launcde through and through with yron Pins : hangde was I by the Heeles
Upon a Tree : my swelling plants the printe thereof yet feeles :
As pray to Beastes, cast out also, to cramme theyr greedy Jawes
In Mount Cytheron, and to fill the griping Vulturs Mawes.
Such Sauce to tast full lyke was I, as others heeretofore
Descended of the royall Sangue, with smart (perforce) have bore.
But see the chaunce : I thus condemn'de by Dan Apollos hest
And cast to beasts by Fathers doome, and every way distrest,
Coulde finde no death : no death on mee durst seyze his lordly Pawe,
But fled from mee, as though I had not beene within his Lawe.
I verified the Oracle, with wicked hand I kilde
Myne owne deere Father, and unwares his guiltlesse bloud I spilde.
Shall any satisfaction redeeme so vile an Acte ?
May any kinde of Piety purge such a shamefull fact ?
I rested not contented thus. For Father beeing slayne,
I fell in linkes of lawlesse Love with Mother : Oh what payne
And grudge of minde sustaynde I there ? in thinking on the same,
To tell our wicked wedlocke Yoake, I loath, I blush, I shame.
I may not well this geare conceale, Ile tell it : out it shall :
Though to my shame it much redound, it may augment my thrall.
I will display straunge villanies, and them in number many,
Most beastlike parts, most lewde attempts, to bee abhorr'de of any.
So filthy, and so monstruous, that (sure I thinke) no Age
Will them believe to have bene done : so cruell was my rage,
That even ech cutthroate Parricide thereat may be ashamde
To heare it nam'de : and with disdaine straight wayes will be enflamde.
My handes in Fathers bloud embrude to Fathers Bed I brought.
And have with Mother myne, his Wife, incestuous practyse sought.
To myschiefe adding mischiefe more : I wis my fault to Sire
Is slender in comparison : my gracelesse fond desire
Could not bee staide, till solemnely the mariage knot was knit
Twixt mee and Mother myne, alas for want of grace and wit.

How plungde am I in myschiefe still ? how is the measure full
Of horrours vile, which doe my minde and heart asunder pull ?
And least the heape of these my woes might seeme to bee too skant,
My Mother (she my Wyfe that is) yong issue doth not want.
Can any crime in all the World more haynous be surmisde ?
If any may : by wicked Impes the same I have devisde.
My Realme and Crowne I have resignde, which I received as hyre
For murdring most unnaturally the king, my Lord, and Syre,
Which Crowne now since, twixt both my sonnes hath kindled mortall war,
And all the countrey by the ears remains at deadly jarre.
I know ful wel what destenies to this same Crowne belonges.
None without Bloud the same shall weare, and most accursed wrongs.
This mynd of myne (who Father am) presageth many ills :
And gloomy dayes of slaughter dyre : the plot that murther willes,
Already is contriv'd and cast : all truth of word and deede
Is quight exild, al promise broke of pactes afore decreed.
Etheocles, thone of my sonnes who now in princely throne
Beares all the sway, meanes stil to keepe the Diademe alone.
Poore Polynices th' other sonne, thus beyng dispossest,
And kept by force from Kingly rule his humble sute addrest
Unto the Gods this wrong to wreake, this breach of league and oth
T' avenge and plague : he Argos soyle and Greekish Cittyes both
Perswades t' assist him in this warre, this quarel to mayntayne :
That he in Thebes (as promise was) might have his turne to raygne.
The ruyne that to wearied Thebes shall greevously befall,
And bring the pompous state therof adowne, shall not be small.
Fire, sword, glave, wounds, and thwacking thumps, shal light unto their share,
And that ere long : and mischieves worse (if any worse there are)
And this shall hap, that all the worlde may know it is the race
And yssue of a cursed Syre that darraygnes such a case.
Though other causes none there were to move you (sir) to live,
Yet is this one sufficient, that you by awe may dryve
Your sonnes my Brethren jarring thus to unity and peace :
For you their Father only may theyr furies cause to cease.

You and none els may turne away thoccasions of this warre :
These bransicke youthes from further rage you onely may debarre,
By this your meanes the countrey shall their quiet peace enjoy
And Brethren joyntly reconcild shal worke no more annoy.
If you therefore this mortall life thus to your selfe deny :
You many thousandes shal undoe, whose states on you relye.
Œd. What ? canst thou make me to beleve, that any sparke of grace
Or love to Syre, or honesty in them hath any place,
Which thirst for one an others bloud, which after kingdomes gape,
Whose whole delight is villany, warre, murther, guile and rape ?
Such hateful ympes on mischiefe set, such wicked Termagauntes,
As to be sonnes of such a Syre with shame may make their vauntes.
At one bare woord to tel thee all : thy brethren two are bent
Uppon all mischiefe, wayghing not what loosenes they frequent.
When flingbrayne rage ensots their heades, they care not they a rush
Upon what Develish vile attemptes they geve the desprat push.
And as they are conceav'd and borne in most abhorred sort,
So still devoyde of Grace they thincke all villany but sport.
Theyr Fathers shame and wretched state moves them no whit at all,
To Countrey they no reckning make what massacre befall.
Their myndes are ravisht with desyre ambitiously to raygne.
I know their driftes, and what they hope at length by shiftes to gayne.
And therefor sith the case so standes I leyfer had to die
With poasting speede whyle in my house there is none worse then I.
Ahlas, deare Daughter what adoe dost thou about me make ?
Why liest thou prostrate at my knees ? why dost thou travaile take,
To conquere my resolved mynd with this thy spiced phraze
Of fayre entreatie ? these thy wordes my flynty hart amaze.
Dame Fortune hath none other bayte to bryng me to her lure
Then this alone : til now I still unvanquisht did endure.
No Creatures words but thyne alone could pearce this hart of myne,
Ne from a purpose resolute my setled mynd untwyne.
Thou conquere canst thaffections fond that in my breast do boyle,
Thou teachest grace to fathers house, and zeale to native soyle.

Each thing to me delightful is which jumpeth with thy wil :
Commaund me (Daughter) I thy hestes am ready to fulfill.
Old Œdipus if thou enjoyne, wil passe th' Ægæan Sea :
And flashing flakes of Aetna Mount, with mouth he dare assay.
He boldly dare object himselfe to raumping Dragons claw
Which rag'd, and sweld and venime spit apace, when as he saw
Dan Hercules away to steale his golden Aples all
In Gardens of Hesperides. At thy commaund, he shall
His entrails offer unto jobbe of greedy Vulturs Byll :
At thy commaund, content he is in life to linger still.

THE SECONDE ACTE

NUNTIUS, ŒDIPUS, ANTIGONE, JOCASTA

RENOWMED Prynce, of royall Race and Noble lygne yspronge :
The Thebans dreading much the drift of this your childrens thronge,
And warlicke garboyle now in hand, most humbly pray your Grace
For Countreys safety, downe to set some order in the case.
They bee not threates and menacies that thus their mindes affright :
The mischiefe is more neere then so : the Enmy is in sight.
For Polynices he that is your younger sonne of twayne,
Doth clayme the crowne, and in his turne in Thebes requires to raigne
According unto covenaunts made : which quarrell to decide
Hee purposeth the dent of sword, and martiall force t' abide.
With him he brings a mighty Troupe from ev'ry part of Greece,
Sir, seven Dukes, besieging Thebes are minded it to fleese.
Helpe noble King, els are wee lyke to perishe man and chylde,
These bloudy broyles of civill warre from us protect and shyelde.
ŒD. Am I one like to stop the rage of any wicked act ?
Am I one like to cause these Youthes to leave their bloudy fact ?
Am I a maister like to teach what lawes of love do meane ?
Should I not then from former guise digresse in nature cleane ?
They treade their Fathers steps aright, they play my lawlesse prankes :
Like Syre, like Sonnes, like Tree, like fruite : I con them harty thanks :

By this I know them for my Sonnes, and praise their towardnesse :
I would they should by peevish partes, whose Sonnes they be, expresse.
Shew forth you noble Gallante ympes, what metled minds you beare,
Shew forth by deedes your valor great, let lofty sprights appeare.
Surmount and dimme my prayses all, Eclypse my glory quight :
Attempt some enterprise in which your Syre may have delight
To have till now remaynd in life : hereof I have no doubt :
For well I know your practise is straunge feates to bring about.
Your byrth and signe from whence you spronge, assures me of no lesse
Such noble Bloudes must needes atchive some doughty worthinesse.
Your Weapons and Artillery for warre bring out with speede,
Consume with flame your native Soyle, and desolation breede
In ev'ry house within the Land : a hurly burly make
Confusedly of ev'ry thinge. Make all the Realme to quake,
And in exile theyr dayes let end : make levell with the ground
Eche fenced Fort and walled Towne : The Gods and all confound,
And throw their Temples on their heads : Their Images deface,
And melt them all : turne upsidowne eche house in ev'ry place.
Burne, spoyle, make havocke, leave no jote of City free from fyre,
And let the flame begin his rage within my Chamber dyre
An. Syr, banish these unpatient panges, let plagues of Common wealth
Entreate your Grace, sith upon you stayth all their hope and health.
Procure your sonnes to reconcile themselves, as brothers ought,
Establishe peace betweene them both, let meanes of love be sought.
Œd. Oh daughter, see and well beholde howe I to peace am bent ?
And how to end these garboyles all I seeme full well content ?
My minde (I tell thee) swelles with yre : within my entrailes boyles
Abundaunt stoare of Choller fell : such restlesse rage turmoyles
My inward Soule, that I must yet some greater matter brew :
Which may the Realme enwrap in bale, and cause them all to rue.
That which my rashe and heady sonnes have hitherto begon
Is nothing in respect of that wich must by me be don.
This civill warre is nothing like to that which I devise :
These trifling broyles for such a Sea of harmes cannot suffice.

Let brother cut the brothers throate with murthrous knife in hand :
Yet is not this ynough to purge the mischieves of this land.
Some haynous Fact, unheard of yet, some detestable deede
Must practisde bee : as is to mee, and myne by Fates decreed.
Such custome haunts our cursed race : such guise our house hath caught :
My vile incestuous Bed requires, such pageaunts to be wrought.
To me your Father Weapons reach, my selfe heere let me shrowde
In covert of these queechy wooddes : and let me be allowde
To lurke behinde this Craggy Rocke, or els my selfe to hyde
On backside of some thickset hedge : where lying unespide,
I hearken may what marketfolkes in passing to and froe
Do talke : and what the countrey Clownes speake, as by way they goe.
There (syth with eyes I cannot see) with eares yet may I heare
How cruelly my Sonnes by warre do one the other teare.
Joc. A fortunate and happy Dame Agave may be thought,
Who (though with bloudy hands) her sonne to fatall death she brought,
And from the shoulders chopt his head, and bore the same about
In bloudy hand, at Bacchus feast with all th' inspired rout
Of sacrificers, quartering poore Pentheus mangled lymmes :
Though this her cruell facte, somewhat her commendation dymmes :
Yet even in these her phrantick fits shee stayde her selfe in time
From further harme, not adding more to aggravate her crime.
My guilt were light, if I had not some others guilty made :
And yet is this but matter light : I tooke a viler trade.
For, Mother I am unto those that in all vice excell,
And who in most abhorred sinnes condignely beare the bell.
To all my woes and myseries there wanted onely this,
That I should love my Countreyes foe, who Polynices is.
Three snowy Wynters passed are, and Sommers three be gone,
Synce he an exilde wretch abroade hath lead his lyfe in moane :
And sought his bread among the fremmd : till now compell'de perforce
Hee craves reliefe of Greekish Kings, on him to have remorse.
Hee maried hath the Daughter of Adrastus, who at becke
Rules Argive people, swaying them with awe of Princely checke :

And he t'advaunce his sonne in law to his most lawfull right
Hath with him brought from seven Realmes a warlike Crue to fight.
What doome I should in this case geve, which syde I wish to winne,
I cannot tell: my minde amazde, yet doubtfull rests therein.
Th' one of my Sonnes (as right it is) requyres the Crowne as due:
I knowe it so accorded was: his cause is good and true.
But in such sort, by force of Armes to redemaunde the same,
Is ill and most unnaturall, herein he is to blame.
What shall I doe, what may I say? I mother am to both:
And thus my Sonnes at deadly fewde to see I am full loth.
Without the breach of mother zeale I can no way devise:
For what good hap I wishe to th' one, thence th' others harme doth rise.
But though I love them both alyke, yet sure my heart enclynes
To him that hath the better cause: though wronged thus, he pynes:
As one by frowning fortune thrilde from pillar unto post:
His Credite, Countrey, friendes, and wealth, and treasure being lost.
The weaker side I will support, and further al I can,
Most mercy alwayes should be shewde unto th' oppressed man.
Nu. While (Madame) you waymenting here your heavy plaints declare:
And waste the time, my Lords your Sonnes in raunged battayle are:
Eche Captaine bright in Armour standes, the Trumpet sounds amain,
And Standard is advanc'de, amid the thronge of eyther traine.
In marshall ray full prest to fight stand seven worthy Kynges:
And eche of them a warlicke troupe of valiaunt Souldiers bringes.
With courage not behynd the best, the Thebanes marche apace:
And like right ympes of Cadmus brood, do flash at Enmies face.
The Souldiers force and willingnes on eyther side to fyght,
Appeares: in that they nothing lesse pretend them shameful flight.
See how their trampling to and froe, the dust to Skies doth reare,
And what a Cloud of Smoke in Campe the horses make t' appeare.
And if my feare dismay me not: If all be true I see:
Me thinkes I view their glittering glaves begoard with bloud to bee.

Me thinkes I see the Voward thrill and shake their Pikes in hand :
Me thinkes I see the Gydons gay, and Streamers where they stand :
Wherein is wrought by curious skill, in Letters all of Gold
The Scotchton, Poesie, Name and Armes of every captayne bold.
Make hast, be gone, dispatch, (Madame) Cause Brethren to agree :
Betwyxt them stay this quarell, least a slaughter great ye see.
So shall you to your Children love, to each syde peace restoare :
The mothers mediation may heale up all the Soare.

THE THIRDE ACTE

ANTIGONE, JOCASTA, NUNTIUS

OAST, poast, be gone, and trudge for life:
Queene mother make no stay:
That twixt my Brothers, perfect league and truce continue may.
You that be Mother to them both, use your auctority:
Out of their handes their weapons wrest, and make them warres defye.
Your bared Breastes which once they suckt, hold out amid their Swordes:
Beare of the brunt of all their blowes, or end this warre with wordes.
Joc. Thy talke I like, I wil be gone: Ile goe with might and mayne:
This head of myne I jeopard wil, betwene them to be slayne.
In thickest thronge of all the Troupes I purposd am to stand,
And try what grace, or curtesy remaynes in eyther Bande.
If Brothers beare malicious myndes each other to subdue,
Let them first onset geve on mee, and me to death pursue.
If eyther of them be endude with any sparke of grace,
Or Natures lawes or Filiall awe doth any whit embrace,
Let him at mothers suite lay downe his Pikes and glaves of warre,
And weapons of hostility let him abandon farre.
And he that cancard stomacke beares his Brother there to quell,
Forgetting Nature, let him first with me his Mother mell.
These headdy youthes from further rage I seely Trot wil staye:
I wittingly will not behold such mischiefe cary sway.
Or if I live to see the same, it shal not bee alone.
An. The Standardes are displayd in field, the Ennemyes are prone

To fall to fight : the clashing noyse of weapons heare you may.
Much murther, death, and dreadfull dule, cannot be far away.
Their stony hartes goe mollify, with sugred termes perswade
Their wilful myndes O Queene, before they furiously invade
The one the other : yonder see how they in armour bright
Bestirre themselves from place to place : (O dire and dismall sight.)
My trickling teares, my blubbring Eyes, may put you out of doubt
That all is true which I have sayd : looke, looke, how al the route
Of eyther part doth slowly march as loth (belike) to trye
By dent of Sword so straunge a case : But both my brothers hie
Apace, to grapple force to force, and joyne with handy blowes :
This day wil breede the bitter smart of ever during woes.
Joc. What whirlewynd swift might I procure to beare me through the ayre ?
What monstruous flying Sphinx wil helpe, that I were quickly there ?
Of all the Byrdes Stimphalides (with winges so huge and large
That Phœbus rayes they shadowed quight) wil any take the charge
To cary mee to yonder place ? what ravenous Harpye Burd
With ugly talantes all with filth, and dirty dung befurde,
(Which hungrestarvd King Phineus, that had put out the Eyes
Of children his) wil at this pinch a meane for me devyse,
That I aloft may hoysed bee, and with al spede be set,
Where yonder cruel armies two in open field be met ?
Nunt. Shee runnes apace, like one of wit and senses all distract :
No Arrow swifter out of Bow : no Ship with Sayle ful thwacke
With wynd at will more way can make : with motion such shee flyes
As glyding Star whose leames do drawe a Furrow longe in Skyes.
As much agast she trottes apace : and now in Campe she standes :
Her presence and arrivall there hath parted both the Bandes.
At mothers great entreaty made, the bloudy broyle is husht :
And where before with goring Glave the one at th' other pusht,
With ful entent to kill and slay, appeas'd is now their yre
And they well pleasd to bend to peace, as she doth them require.

The Sword agayne in sheath is put, that lately out was drawne
To pash out Braynes of Brothers Scull : she ceaseth not to fawne
Upon them both, their strife to stint : her gray and hoary haires,
Her Snow whyte lockes with tears besprent in ruthful sort she teares.
She Motherlike seekes how to linke their hartes in one assent,
With brynish teares she wettes the cheekes of him thats malcontent.
That Child that staggryng longe doth stand, with mother to dispute,
May seeme unwilling mynd to beare to yeeld to Mothers sute.

THE FOURTH ACTE

JOCASTA, POLYNICES

AGAYNSTE mee onely turne the force of wreckful
Sword and Fyre :
Let all the Youthes with one accord repay to
me that hyre,
That earnde I have by due deserte : let both
the gallant Band
Of them that come from Argos soyle, and them
of Thebane Land
Come runne upon me all at once : let neither freend ne foe
Refrayne a whit his bloudy blade at this my wombe to throw.
This wombe, this wombe, wherein I bare these wilful Brethren
here
Begot by hym that was my sonne, and eke my wedded fere.
Dismembre this my Body vyle : cast all my lymmes abrode :
I am their mother : child wyfe throwes for them I once abode.
You two, my sonnes, neede I to speake, to wil you leave your
yre ?
Ist not your partes, in such a case t' accomplish my desyre ?
Wil you not plight the faythful league of true and perfect love ?
Wil you not joyntly quarrels all at Mothers sute remove ?
That this shalbe as I request, come, geve me both your handes
While they yet undystayned be, and cleane from murther standes.
What cryme you heretofore have done, agaynst your wil it was.
And al that spot which staynes your fame, by Fortune came to
passe.
This haynous Act, this franticke coyle you can no wise excuse.
But wittingly and willingly sound counsell yee refuse.
It resteth free within your choyse : of these take which yee list :
If peace delight, for mothers sake this brabling broyle untwist.

If such a lewde outrage as this more pleasaunt seeme to bee :
Behold, the same and greater too yee may commit on mee.
Who beeing mother, heere oppose my selfe betwene you twayne :
Ere you do one an other kill, I needes must first be slayne.
Take either therefore quight away this straunge ungodly jarre,
Or if you will not : mee dispatch, who stay your wished warre ?
Ahlas in this my pensive plight to whom should I dyrect
My piteous plaint, and earnest suyte ? to whom might I detect
Myne inward griefe and throbbed heart ? which of them were I best
T' encounter first and fast embrace, to breede my surest rest ?
I love them both even equally, affection like I beare
To either party : mother fond and parciall els I weare.
The one of them these three yeares space hath liv'de in banishment.
But if all covenaunts may be kept, as at the first was ment,
The other now as turne doth fall, must trudge an other while,
And learne to know what tis to live so long in like exile.
Woe worth this haplesse heavy hap : shall I not live the day,
To see my sonnes together once in one selfe place to stay ?
Shall never I behold them both to better concord bent ?
Is all affection naturall within them both so spent ?
Then, Polynices, come thou fyrst, embrace thy Mother deare ?
Thou that hast travaild many a myle, and languisht many a yeare.
That many a storme abidden haste, and many a brunt sustainde,
And wearied long with sharpe exile, from Mothers sight bene wainde :
Come unto mee, and neerer stand, put up thy Sword againe
Into thy sheath : thy shyvering Speare (that out of hand so faine
Would be dischargd at Brothers throate) within this ground sticke fast.
This Shielde of thine lay also downe. It makes mee sore agast.
It is so bigge, it will not let this loving breast of myne
To joyne and debonairely meete with that sweete heart of thine :
Take of thy helmet from thine head, the Thonge thereof unty,
That I thy Visage may behold, and all thy face descry.
Why dost thou backward turne thy head ? and glauncest still thine Eye,
And takest keepe of brothers hand for feare of villany ?

Thy body all with these myne Armes I will defend and hyde :
If hee attempt thy bloud to spill, his murthrous blade shall glyde
First through these tender sydes of myne : why standst thou so amazd ?
Dost thou distrust thy Mothers love ? thinkst thou her kindnes razd ?
Poly. I feare in deede, distrusting sore, Syre, Damme and all my kinne :
And thinke that truthles treachery in hartes of all hath bin.
Dame Natures lawes are flung at heele, and naught esteemed be :
No fayth in kinred planted is, ne true syncerity.
Synce I by proofe have seene and felt what hurly burly growes
Betwixt us Brethren : and from thence what Sea of mischiefe flowes :
I may suspect no faster fayth in Mother to remayne :
Its not unlike, but shee likewyse wil prankes as bad mayntaine.
Joc. Thy sword in hand fast clasped keepe : On heade thy Basnet tye :
On Left Arme holde thy Targat sure, and on thy Gard relye.
At all poyntes armd prepared stand : all future doubtes prevent :
Be sure to see thy Brother first t' unarme himselfe content.
And now to thee Etheocles some speech I am to use :
Thou first wast cause of all this warre, doe not therfore refuse
Downe first to lay thy brawling Blade, and yeld to Reasons lore :
If name of peace so hateful be, if that thou any more
Entendst this warre to prosecute, in this so savage sort,
Let mother yet this curtesy from thee (her sonne) extort
That some small tyme of trusty truce thou wilt with willing mynd
Consent unto : til I my Sonne thy Brother most unkind
May after flight goe kisse and col, now first or last of all.
Whyle I for peace entreaty make, you men unarmd I call
To listen unto that I say : thy Brother feareth thee :
And thou fearst him : and I feare both. But this my feare you see
Is nothing for my selfe at all, but for th' avayle of both.
Why seemest thou thy naked sword to put in sheath so loth ?
Be glad to take the benefyte of any litle stay :
In matters lewde tis wysedome good to stand upon delay.

You enter into such a warre, wherein he speedeth best
That vanquisht is : both of you feare to be by fraud distrest
Through practisd meanes and subtil plots of Brothers spitefull drift,
Or overreacht by pollicy of some devysed shift.
But if deceive or be deceyv'd by him that is our Frend
Wee needes must be : in such a case wee shall the lesse offend
In suffring wrong then doyng harme : But feare thou not a whit,
You both from ambusht treacheryes your Mother wil acquit.
What say you Sonnes : shall this request of myne with you prevayle,
Or shall I curse my luckelesse fate, and on my Fortune rayle.
And judge your Sire an happy man, in that he liveth blinde
And cannot see the thing which I beholde with pensive minde ?
In comming unto you, did I bring with mee this intent,
To ende these broyles ? or did I come to see some dyre event ?
Etheocles, somewhat appeasde, hath pitcht his Speare in ground,
And not a weapon bloud to sheed, in hand of his is found.
Now Polynices, unto thee my former suite I bring,
Regard thy Mothers mournefull plight, and yeelde unto the thing
That shee with teares entreates to have. O Sonne, at length I see,
I hold with hands, I kisse with mouth, I touch with joyfull glee
This Face of thyne, the sight whereof I wanted have so longe :
And have more often wished for, then can bee tolde with tonge.
Thou hast from native Soyle bene chasde to Coaste of forraigne King,
And crossed bene with frouncing force of frowning Fortunes sting.
Thou many a Storme, and many a brunt in many a foming Sea,
In Wandring sort and banisht guise, didst oftentimes assay.
Thy Mother at thy Spousall feast was absent farre away,
And could not doe such nuptiall Rytes as fell for such a day.
Into thy wedding Chamber shee brought thee, ne yet thy Bryde,
Ne yet in solemne sorte the house with herbes and odours plide :
Ne yet did with a Ryband white the wedding Torches tye,
As use and custome willes to bee at such solempnitie.
Adrastus, Father to thy Wife, and father in lawe to thee,
With Daughter his, hath not defraide much store of golde or Fee.
No Dower hath he bestowde on her, her wealth was very small,
Of Citties, Landes, and Revenewes hee gave her none at all.

Warre, Warre, is it thou onely hadst, by taking her to Wyfe :
In lew of other gyfts, hee helpes to kindle all this Stryfe.
Thou Sonne in lawe arte unto him, that is our Countreyes Foe :
Thy Native soyle thou leavest, and to forraigne Courts doth goe.
Thou feedest now at Straungers boarde, and makest more accoumpt
Of new acquaintaunce got abroade : as though it did surmount
The friendship of thy country heere : thou art a banisht wight,
And liv'st in exile, for no fault, but through thy brothers spight.
In thee appeares resemblaunce playne of all thy Fathers Fate,
In which there lacketh not so much as choyse of wedded Mate.
Whom with as ill mischaunce and hap as ever Fathers was,
Thou haste in lucklesse houre and time of mariage brought to passe.
O Sonne, thy mothers onely hope, for whom such care I take :
Whose sight, now after many yeares, doth mee most joyfull make.
For whom I have full many a time to Gods devoutly praide :
Whereas in deede, thy new retourne to mee, may well bee saide
To take away as great a joye, and bring as great a griefe,
As it to these myne aged yeares is comfort and reliefe.
I prostrate at the Oracle, besought Apollos Grace
To tell mee, when I should not neede to further feare thy case.
Who flowting this my fond demaund, anone did flatly tell,
And spake these words, which yet (I trow) I doe remember well.
Thou fearst thy son, least harme he take, as is a mothers guise :
But thou I say more cause shalt have, to feare him otherwise.
For if this warre unraisde had bene I should thy presence lacke :
And if thou wert not, Thebane Land might free remayne from Sacke.
The sight of thee doth cost us all a hard and nipping price,
Yet doth it like thy mother well : so that her sound advice
In this one thing thou follow wilt. Dispatch these Armies hence :
Even presently, whyle yet of bloud there hath not bene expence.
So foule a Fact to bee so neere, is haynous out of doubt :
I shake, I quake to thinke thereon, in every Joynt throughout.
My hayre stands upright even for feare, two brethren thus to see
Aloofe, and ready one to chop at th' other, cruelly.
How neere was I (poore Mother theirs, a bloudier act t' have seene.)
Then father blind yet ever saw, or ever yet would weene ?

And though my feare be overpast, and th' act unbrought to passe :
My selfe yet doe I wretched thincke, that done so neere it was.
By all the throwes for tenne months space, in wombe when I thee bare,
And for thy Sisters sake both twaine, which shine in vertue rare :
And by those Eyehoales of thy Syre, for which with wrekefull Pawe
Hee pulld his Eyes, because (unwares) hee stained Natures lawe,
I thee beseech from Thebane Walles send backe these armed Bandes,
Which threatning all our throates to cut, against our Countrey stands :
Yea though you presently depart : yet are you much to blame,
And there is due unto you both, a blot of during shame :
Because this Countrey round about hath pestred bene with powre,
And troupes of Souldiours stout and brave, it ready to devowre.
With pensive hearts and mourning minds, these Eyes of ours have seene
Your prauncing coursers with their Feete, spoile Theban Medowes greene.
Wee oft have seene your haulty Peeres in warlike Chariot ride :
And oft our houses to have brunt with wildfier have bene spide.
And last of all. An act wee sawe (which even to Thebes is straung.)
Two Brethren warring mortally, all Natures bondes to chaung.
Ech one in th' Army sawe this sight, the people witnesse bee.
Your Systers two, and Mother I this all did plainly see.
Your Father, hee may thanke himselfe : that he did not behold
This lamentable spectacle and havockes manifold.
Call now to thy remembraunce heere, thy Father Œdipus,
Whose doome, did Facts (by errour done) even plague, and punishe thus.
With Fyre, and sword subvert not cleane (good Sonne) thy countrey deare,
And Thebes (whereof thou wouldst be king) surcease with force to teare.
What Bedlem pang enchaunts thy mind ? what might thy meaning bee ?
Thou claymst a Realme, which to subvert thou geevest lycence free.

In seeking thus a countryes rule : a countrey thou destroyest :
Which thou thine own would make, thou marr'st, and (as twere none) annoyest.
Heereby thou hindrest much thy selfe, in that thou makest spoyle,
And burnest up both Corne and Grasse, and keep'st a shamefull coyle,
In chasing men out of their homes : (O desprate witlesse parte)
What man alive, to waste his owne, can thus find in his harte ?
These thinges that thou commaundest thus by rage of sword and flame
To bee consum'de : an other man thou thinkst doth owe the same.
If thus for princely Chayre you twayne by th' Eares your title try :
The state of Realme and Commonwealth will totter soone awry.
Seeke it, while yet your Countrey standes unblemisht by decay :
It so t' enjoy, and so to raigne, I coumpt the better way.
Ah, canst thou finde in heart to burne, and spoyle these houses brave ?
The lyke whereof in all the worlde besides, thou canst not have :
Canst thou destroy and ruinate the noble Thebane wall,
To whose first building stones apace at Dan Amphions call
Came dauncing of their owne accord, through tunes of warbling harpe ;
And coucht themselves in order right upon the Turrets sharpe,
Without all helpe of worckmans hand, or Pully up to draw
Such pieces as most waighty were ? Wilt thou by lawlesse law
Throw downe these worthy Monuments ? wilt thou from hence convey
And cary with thee all these spoyles ? wilt thou such pageaunts play ?
Thy Fathers old acquainted mates, wilt thou by force surpryze
And leade as captive where thou goest in proude triumphing wise ?
Shall these thy cutthroate Souldiors dragge and hale the mothers old ?
Shal they, graund Matrons tied in chaines, from husbands armes unfold ?
Shall Thebane Maydes, and Damselles chaste of freshe and lusty Age,
Bee mingled with the raskal rout, and hamperd bee in Cage ?

Shall they as presents, forced bee in dabbling dirt to toyle
Unto the mynsing Mistresses, and Trulles of Argos Soyle ?
Shall I thy seely Mother trudge with Pinyond hands behinde ?
Shall I this triumph of my Childe to furnish bee assignde ?
Canst thou with grudgelesse minde, behold thy Countreyfolkes arow,
Slayne, mangled, spoylde, in peeces hewen, thus to their deathes to goe ?
Canst thou bring in a deadly Foe, thy Countrey to subdue ?
Shall streates of Thebes runne all with bloud ? shall all the Countrey rue
Thy comming home with flame and fyre ? hast thou an heart so hard ?
A breast so tipt with flint ? a mynde to rage so well preparde ?
If thus thou fare, and swell with yre whiles yet thou art no King :
What wilt thou bee in Princely throne, if thou shouldst win the King ?
Surcease therefore and qualifie this outrage of thy mynde :
In thee let all thy Countrey, grace and Princely myldnes finde.
Pol. Would you me have, my selfe so much to loyall duties yeeld,
As that I should a Pylgrims life like wandring Beast in field
Skud up and downe from place to place, without both house and home,
And fleeing native soyle, bee forst in forraigne Landes to roame ?
What other plagues could you award in justice unto mee,
If I my fayth or sacred Oath had broken caytifly ?
Shall I beare all the punishment for that vile villains guile ?
And shall hee false deceiptfull wretch at my misfortunes smyle ?
Shall hee in wealth still flaunt it out, and keepe this jolly coyle ?
Shall hee for sinnes rewarded bee ? and I still put to foyle ?
Well, well, goe to, bee as bee may : you bid mee wander hence :
I am content : your hard decree t' obay is my pretence.
But tell mee whyther shall I goe ? Assigne mee to some place :
Bylike, you would that brother myne should still with shamelesse face
Possesse my stately Pallaces, and revell in his ruffe,
And I thereat to holde my peace, and not a whit to snuffe,

But like a Countrey Mome to dwell in some poore thatched Cot :
Allow mee poore Exyle such one : I rest content, God wot.
You know, such Noddyes as I am, are woont to make exchaung
Of Kingdomes, for poore thatched Cots, beelike this is not straung
Yea more : I, matcht now to a Wyfe of noble ligne and race
Shall like a seely Dottipoll live there in servile case,
At becke and checke of queenely Wyfe, and like a kitchin drudge
Shall at Adrastus lordly heeles, (my Wyves owne Father) trudge.
From Princely Port to tumble downe into poore servile state,
Is greatest griefe that may betyde by doome of frouncing fate.
Joc. If that thou gape so greedely a Kingly Crowne to weare :
And that thou canst not rest content, till thou a Scepter beare :
Behold ech quarter of the world affoordeth Kingdomes store.
No doubt thou mayst winne some of them, if that thou seke therfore.
On one syde here, lies Tmolus mount, a soyle bethwact with Wines :
There runnes Pactolus noble streame with golden Sand and mynes,
On that syde crookt Meander glydes through midst of Phrygia fieldes :
On this syde Hebrus swift of course much fruict to Thracia yeldes.
Nere thereunto lies Gargarus, renoumd each where for Corne,
And Trojan Xanthus swelling flood, that pricke and price hath borne.
There Seftos and Abidus stand in mouth of Ionian Sea,
Which now is called Hellespont : and here an other waye
Are countreys, which more Eastward lye. There Lycia full of Creekes
And Havens strong is situate : these kingdomes, he that seekes,
Is like to winne : these would I have thee conquere with thy Sword :
These, these to winne let King Adrast to thee his ayd affoorde.
In some of these, let him thee make a King : in Thebes as yit,
Suppose thy father Œdipus in seat of King to sit.
Thy banishment much better is to thee, then this returne,
Sith all thy drift is cruelly to wast, to spoyle, and burne.
Thy banishment reputed is to grow through others crime :
This thy retourne, in such a sort to Kingly state to clyme,
Is ill and faulty every way : with this thy warlicke crue
Thou shalt do better Realms to seeke, where bloudy guilt ne grue.

Yea, this thy Brother, whom thou dost pursue with deadly hate
Whose life, whose health, whose house thou dost with curses dire rahate
Wil ayde thee with all powre he canne : himselfe will also goe
And serve in field for thyne avayle, gaynst him that is thy foe.
Advaunce thy powre, march boldly forth to take this warre in hand:
Wherein thy parentes wish thee good, and wil thy helpers stand.
A Kingdome got mischievously, and snatcht with grudge of mynd,
More greevous is then exiles al, of what soever kind.
Of warre, the doubtful hazardes all set downe before thy syght,
And throughly weigh thuncertayne chaunce, that longes to martial fight.
Though al the power of Grece thou bring thy quarel to mayntayne,
And though great armed multitudes of Souldiours thou retayne :
Yet chaunce of warre stil doubtful hanges, and hard it is to know,
Who cary shal the victory, thou or thy vowed foe.
Mars no party tyed is : what he decrees, shal be,
As chaunce allots, so falles it out : this dome abydeth free.
Sword, hope and feare makes equall those, betwene whom otherwyse
Great oddes there is : blynd Fortunes lot the case betweene them tryes.
Thy rash attempt with cryme begonne, gropes after doubtful gayne:
And fond devyses enterprisd oft reape deserved payne.
Admit that all the Gods in heaven did further thy request,
And to promote thy hoat desyre both willing were, and prest:
Yet al thy frendes are fled away, and al recoyled backe,
And Souldiours here and there in Fieldes are come to deadly wracke.
Although thou joy hereat receyve, although the spoyles thou take
Of vanquisht Brother, yet the palme of victory must slake,
And not to thee be geven whole. What kind of warre (alas)
Is this, thinkst thou ? ist not more straunge then ever any was ?
Wherin if he that victor is, joy therein any whyt,
Most execrable wickednes he (doubtles) doth commit.
This Brother thyne, whom now so faine thou wouldst bereave of breath,
I wis, if he were once dispatcht, thou wouldst bewale his death.
And therfore make no more adoe, but cease from wicked bral,
Ridde countrey out of trembling feare, and parentes dole forestal.

Poly. What, shal my Brother for this vyle and shamefull breach of pacte
Goe skotfree thus ? shal he receyve no guerdon for his fact ?
Joc. Feare not my Sonne, he shall be payd, and payd agayne, I trow:
He shalbe King and raygne in Thebes, his payne shal even be so.
A payne in grayne I warrant him. And if thou doubtful be,
Let Graundsyre Laius and thy Syre examples be to thee.
Sir Cadmus wil the same display, and Cadmus ofspring all
Can witnes be that none in Thebes yet raygnd without a fall.
None yet the Theban Scepter swayd, that hath not felt the whippe.
And promise breach made most of them from regall Crowne to skippe.
Now if thou wilte, thou mayst insert within this bedroll heere
Thy Brother. Poly. Mary, that I wil, in shame hath he no peere.
And unto mee it seemes a world of blisse to bee a king
And dye with Kings. Joc. Thy case doth thee in rank of exiles bring.
Raygne Kinge, but yet a loathed wight unto thy Subjectes all.
Poly. For that I neyther recke ne care what shall to me befall.
That Prince that feares disdaynful hate, unwilling seemes to raygne.
The God that swayes the Golden Globe, together hath these twayne
Conjoynd and coupled Hate and Rule : and him do I suppose
To be a noble King indeede, that can supplant his foes,
And Subjectes cancred hate suppresse. A King is often stayed
From doyng many thinges he would, when Subjectes love is wayed.
But unto them that do repyne to se him sit aloft,
He may more rigour boldly shew, and pare their pates more oft.
He that will love of Subjectes winne, with Clemency must raygne :
A King that 's hated, cannot long in Kingly seate remayne.
For Kingdomes Kinges can best describe, what preceptes needfull are.
Mell thou in cases of Exile : for Kingdomes take no care.
Poly. To be a King, I would engage to force of flaming Fire,
Both Countrey, house, land, Wyfe, and Chyld, to compasse my desyre.
No Fee, to purchase Princely seate, ne labour coumpt I lost :
A Kingly Crowne is never deare, what ever price it cost.

Thomas Newtonus, Cestreshyrius.

FINIS

THE FOURTH, AND MOST RUTHFUL TRAGEDY OF L. ANNAEUS SENECA

ENTITULED HIPPOLYTUS

TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISHE BY JHON STUDLEY

THE ARGUMENT

Hippolytus, the Sonne of Theseus and Antiopa Quene of the Amazons, renouncing al Worldly pleasures, and carnall delightes, lyved a Batcheler, forbearing all Womens company, and amorous allurements: and only vowed himselfe to the service of chaste Diana, pursuing the Gentlemanly pastime of hunting. In the absence of Theseus his Father, it chaunced that his Stepmother Phædra ardently enamored with his beawty and lusty age, enveigled him by all meanes shee coulde, to commit wyth her filthy, and monstruous adultry. Whych her beastly, unchaste, and undutifull practise, hee dutifully loathinge, shee turned hir former love into extreame hatred, and told her husband Theseus at his returne home, that his Sonne Hippolytus woulde have unlawfully layne with her. Theseus believing his Wyves most untrue accusation, meant to have put his sonne to death. Hippolytus understanding thereof, got up into his Chariot and fled. Theseus being therewith tickeled, and after some pursuite, not overtaking him, went to his Father Ægæus beeing a God of the Sea, desiring him to graunt him three Wishes: the last whereof was, the destruction and Death of Hippolytus: whereupon Ægæus sent out certaine great Sea-monsters, or Whirlepooles, which affrighting the Horses in Hippolytus Charyot, made them to overturne the Charyot, and to runne through thick and thinne till they had dismembred true Hippolytus in pieces. The remorse of which villany so strake Phædra in Conscience, that with a Sword shee stabbed herselfe into the Entrailes, and died upon the body of Hippolytus.

THE SPEAKERS NAMES

Hippolytus.
Phædra.
Nuntius.
Chorus.
Theseus.
Nutrix.

HIPPOLYTUS

THE FIRST ACTE

HIPPOLYTUS

OE raunge about the shady Woods, beset on every side
With Nets, with Hounds, and toyles, and running out at randon ride
About, about, the craggy crests of high Cecropes hill,
With speedy foote about the Rockes, with coursing wander still.
That under Carpanetus Soyle, in Dale below doth lurke,
Whereas the Rivers running swift, their flapping waves doe worke,
And dashe against the beaten Banks of Thrias valley low,
And clamber up the slimy clives, besmeard with hory Snow,
(That falleth, when the Westerne winde from Riphes Mounts doth blow.)
Heere, heere away, let other wend, whereas with lofty head,
The Elme displayes his braunched armes, the wood to overspread.
Whereas the Meadowes greene doe lye, where Zephyrus most milde
Out brayes his baumy breath so sweete, to garnish up the field
With lusty springtide flowers fresh whereas Elysus slow
Doth fleete upon the Ysie flakes, and on the Pastures low.
Mæander sheds his stragling streame, and sheares the fruitlesse sand
With wrackfull wave : yee whom the path on Marathons left hand,
Doth lead unto the leavened launds, whereas the heirde of beast
For Evening forrage goe to graze, and stalke unto their rest.
The rascall Deare trip after fast, you thither take your way,
Where clottered hard Acarnan forst warme Southerne windes t' obay

THE FOURTH TRAGEDY

Doth slake the chilling colde, unto Hymerus Ysie clive
To Alphids litle Villages, now let some other drive :
That plot where Sunion surges high doe beate the sandy bankes,
Whereas the marble Sea doth fleete with crooked compast crankes,
Unhaunted lies too long, withoutten race of any wight.
Who set agog with hunting brave, in woods doth take delyght,
Philippis him allures : her hauntes a fomy bristled Bore
That doth annoy with gastly dread the husbandmen full sore :
We know him well for he it is foyld with so many woundes,
But ere they do begin to ope, let slip, let slip your Houndes.
But in your leashes Syrs keepe up your eiger Mastifs yet,
Keepe on their Collers still, that doe their galled neckes yfret :
The Spartayne Dogges eiger of pray and of couragious kynd
That sone can single out their game, wherto they be assygnd,
Tye shorter up within your leash : to passe tyme shall it bring,
That with the youlping noyse of houndes the hollow rockes shal ring.
Now let the Houndes goe fynd of it with Nosthrell good of sent,
And trace unto the uglye den ere dawning day be spent.
Whyle in the dewish stabby ground the pricke of cleaze doth sticke.
One bear the toyle on cumbred necke, and some with nettes ful thicke
Make speede : some with the arming coard by pensell paynted red
By sleight, and subtill guyleful feare shall make the Beastes adred :
Loke thou to pitch thy thirling dart, and thou to trye thy might,
Shalt cope him with broad Boarespeare : thrust with hand both lefte and right,
Thou standing at receipt shalt chase the roused beastes amayne
With hallowing : thou with limere sharpe undoe him beyng slayne.
Graunt good successe unto thy mate, Virago, thou Divyne,
That secret desartes chosen hast for noble Empire thyne :
Whose thirled Dartes with leavel right do gore the Beast with Bloud
That lappes the lukewarme licour of Arexis fleeting Floud.
And eke the Beast that sportes it selfe on frosen Isters strand.
The ramping Lyons eake of Geate are chased by thy hand.
And eke the wyndy heeled Hart in Candie thou dost chase.
Now with more gentle launce thou strikst the Doe that trippes apace.

To thee the Tygar fierce his divers spotted breast doth yeeld,
The rough shaghatry Bugle turnes on thee his backe in field,
Eke salvage Buffes with braunched hornes : all thinges thy quarelles feare,
That to the needy Garamas in Affricke doth appeare.
Or els the wyld Arabian enriched by his wood,
Or what the Brutish roches at Pyrene understood,
Or else what other Beastes do lurcke in wyld Hyrcanus grove,
Or else among Sarmatians in desert fieldes that rove :
If that the Ploughman come to field, that standeth in thy grace,
Into his nettes the roused beast full sure he is to chase.
No feete in sunder breake the coardes and home he bringes the Bore
In jolting wayne, when as the houndes with gubs of clottered gore,
Besmeared have their grymed snoutes : and then the Countrey rout
To Cottages repayre in rankes, with triumph all about.
Lo, Goddesse graunt us grace : the hounds already opened have,
I follow must the Chase : this gainer way my paynes to save,
I take into the woods.

THE SECOND SCEANE

PHÆDRA, NUTRIX

O Countrey Crete that beares the sway, upon the Seas so vast,
Whose Ships so thicke in every Shore, the Seas doe overcast,
What ever coast as farre as is Assyria lande doth lye,
Where Nereus doth the piked Stemme to cut his course deny,
Why force ye mee that yeelded am, a pledge to those I hate ?
And gieven in Bridall bed to bee my enmies Spousall mate,
To languish out my time in teares, in woe to leade my lyfe ?
My husband lo, a runnagate is gon from mee his Wyfe,
Yet Theseus still performes his Othe alike unto his Spouse
As earst to Ariadne, when hee falsifide his Vowes :
Hee champion stoute dare enterprise the darkenesse deepe to passe
Of lothsome Lake, whence yet found out, no way returning was.

THE FOURTH TRAGEDY

A souldier of the Wooer bolde Proserpin home to bring,
Out pullde perforce from grisly throne of Dire infernall King.
Accompanide with fury fierce hee marcheth forward still,
Whom neither dread nor shame could force forbeare his wicked will.
With lawlesse wedlocks ravishments Hippolytus his Sire
Doth in the boyling bottom deepe of Acheron require,
But yet another greater griefe swayes on my pensive brest,
No silent night, nor slumber deepe can set my heart at rest.
My sorrow still is nourished, and still encreaseth it,
And ranklesse in my boyling breast, as out of Ætnaes pit.
The stifling vapour upward flies and Pallas Web, it standes
At rest, my dropping distaffe downe doth drop betweene my handes.
My luskish minde it hath no lust my vowed gifts to pay
Unto the Temples of the Gods that live my Theseus may :
Nor rigging with Th'athenian Dames among the aulters proude
To tosse the fiery brands, unto the sacrifice aloude,
Nor yet devoutly praying at the Aares with godly guise
To Pallas president in earth to offer sacrifice :
It doth delight me to pursue the chased beasts in flight,
And tosse my flashing Faucon fierce with nimble hand full light,
What ayles thou minde this mad to take conceypte in freight and fell ?
My wretched mothers fatall vice a breeding now I smell :
To cloake our crime, our lust doth knowe, woods are the fittest place,
Alas good Mother, I lament the heavy lucklesse case :
Thou rashe attaint with lothsome lust enamored is thy breast.
Even with the cruell head of al the herd of salvage beast,
That churlish angry roaring Bull no yoake can hee sustayne,
And hee among the wilde, and eke untamed Neat doth raygne.
Yet was enclinde to love : what God can graunt mee my desire ?
Or Dedalus with curious craft can ease my flaming fire ?
Not if hee might returne, whom Ariadne hath instruct
From crooked compast Laberinth by thred that out hee pluckt
Among the lurcking corners close, and wily winding way,
To grope his footing backe agayne, and did deprive of day

Our monstrous Minotaur enclosde in Maze and Dungeon blinde :
Although hee promise to our sore, no salve yet can hee finde :
Through mee Apollos Progeny doth Venus quite agayne,
The filthy shame that shee and Mars together did sustayne.
Whom Phœbus taking at their taske all naked in the Skie,
Hung up in Nets, a laughing stocke to every gasing Eye :
For this all Phœbus stocke, with vile and foule reproche she staynes,
In some of Minos family still lothsome lusting raygnes :
One mischiefe brings another in. Nu. O Theseus wyfe, and Chylde
Of Jove, let vyce be soone out of thine honest breast exilde :
And quench the raging heat : to dire dispayre doe not up yeeld,
Who at the first repulseth love, is safe and winnes the field,
Who doth by flattring fancy fonde feede on his vitious vayne,
To late doth grudge agaynst the yoake which earst hee did sustayne :
Nor yet doe I forget how hard, and voyde of reason cleane :
A Princes stately stomacke yeeldes unto the golden meane :
Ph. That ende I will accept, whereto by Fortune I can leade
The neighbors weale great comfort brings unto the horie heade.
Nu. The first redresse is to withstand, not willingly to slide,
The second is to have the fault by meane and measure tride :
O wicked wretch what wilt thou doe ? why dost thou burden more
The stayned stocke and dost excell thy mothers fault afore ?
More haynous is thy guilt than yet thy mothers Monster was :
For monsters mayst thou thinke are brought by destiny to passe :
But let the cause of sinne, to blame of maners lewde redounde :
And if bicause thy husband doth, not breath above the grounde.
Thou thinkst thou mayst defend thy fault, and make thy matter good
And free from feare : thou arte beguilde, yet thinke the Stygian flood
In griefly gaping gulfe for aye hath drenched Theseus deepe,
But yet thy Syre, whose Kingdomes large the Seas at will do keepe :
Whose dredfull doome pronounceth panges, and due deserved payne,
Two hundreth wayling soules at once. Will he thinkst thou maintayne

So haynous crime to couche ? the care of tender Parents breast
Full wise, and wary is to bring their children to the best.
Yet shall we thinke by subtill meane, by craft and divelish guile,
In hugger mugger close to keepe our trechery so vile.
What shall thy mothers father Phœbe, whose beames so blasing bright,
With fiery gleede on every thing, doth shed his golden light ?
Or Jove the Grandsire great of Gods that all the world doth shake,
And brandisheth with flaming Fist, his fiery lightnings flake :
That Vulcane doth in Fornace hoate, of dusky Ætna make
Thinkst thou thys may be brought to passe, so haynous crime to hide ?
Among thy Grandsire all that have eche privy thing espide ?
But though the favor of the Gods conceale the second time
Thy lothsome lust (unworthy name) and to thy baudy crime,
Sure faythfulnesse annexed be, that ever barred was.
Ech great offence, what will this worke ? a present plague, alas
Suspicion lest the guilty night bewray thy deede unjust :
And conscience burdned sore with sinne that doth it selfe mistrust.
Some have commit offence full safe from any bitter blame,
But none without the stinging pricks of conscience did the same :
Asswage the boyling flames of this thy lewde ungratious love,
Such monstrous mischiefe horrible from modest minde remove.
Which never did Barbarian commit unto this day,
No not the Gadding Gothes that up and downe the fyeldes do stray.
Nor craggy crested Taurus mount whose hoary and frosty face
With numming cold abandons all inhabitors the place.
Nor yet the scattered Scithian, thy mother have in mynd,
And feare this forrayne venery, so straunge agaynst thy kind :
The Fathers wedlocke with the sonnes thou seekst to be defylde,
And to conceive in wicked womb a Bastard Mungrell Child :
Go too, and turne thy Nature to the flame of burning breast.
Why yet do Monsters cease ? why is thy Brothers cave in reast.
That Mynotaurus hideous hole and ugly couching den
Without an other greedy fyend to mounch up flesh of men ?
Mishapen, lothly monsters borne so oft the world shall heare,
So oft rebels agaynst her selfe confused Nature deare,

As love entangles Nimphes of Crete. PH. I know the truth ye teach
O Nurce, but fury forceth mee at worser thinges to reach :
My mynd even wittingly to vyce falles forward prone and bent
To holesome counsell backe agayne in vayne it doth relente :
As when the Norman tugges and toyles to bring the fraighted Barke
Agaynst the striving streame, in vayne he loseth al his carke
And downe the shallow streame perforce the Shyp doth hedlong yeeld,
Where reason preaseth forth, there fighting fury winnes the field,
And beares the swinging sway, and cranke Cupidoes puissant might
Tryumpheth over all my breast this flighty winged wight
And puissant potestate throughout the world doth beare the stroke,
And with unquenched flames doth force Joves kindled breast to smoake,
The Battelbeaten Mars hath felt these bitter burning brandes,
And eke the God hath tasted these whose fervent fierye handes,
The thumping thunder bouncing boltes three forked wyse doth frame,
And he that ever busied is about the furious flame,
In smoltring Fornace raging hoat on dusky top so hie
Of foggye Aetna mount : and with such slender heat doth frie,
And Phœbe himselfe that weldes his dart upon his twanging string,
With aymed shaft directlie driven the wimpled Ladde doth sting.
With powre he scoures along the Earth and Marble Skye amayne.
Lust favoring folly filthily did falsely forge and fayne
Love for a God : and that he might hys freedome more attayne.
Ascribes the name of fayned God to shittel bedlame rage.
Erycina about the world doth send her roving page,
Who glyding through the Azure skies with slender joynted arme
His perlous weapons weildes at will, and working grievous harme,
Of bones and stature beyng least great might he doth display
Upon the Gods, compelling them to crouch and him obey.
Some Brainsicke head did attribute these thinges unto himselfe,
And Venus Godhead with the bow of Cupid little else.
Who cockred is, tryumphing much in fauning fortunes lap,
And flotes in welth, or seekes and sues for thinges that seldome hap,

Lust (mighty fortunes mischeous mate) assaulteth straight his breast,
His tooth contempneth wonted fare and victuals homly drest.
Nor hansome houses pleaseth him, why doth this plague refuse
The simple sort, and to annoy doth stately bowers chuse ?
How haps it matrimony pure to byde in Cottage base ?
And honest love in middle sort of men doth purchase place ?
And thinges that be of meane estate themselves restraine ful wel,
But they that wallow in their luste whose stately stomackes swell,
Puft up and bolstred bigge with trust of Kingly scepter proude
Do greater matters enterprise then may be well alowde.
Hee that is able much to do, of powre wil also bee
To do these thinges he cannot doe. Now Lady dost thou see
What thinges do thee beseeme thus staid on stately throne on hie ?
Mistrust the scepter of thy spouse returning by and by.
Ph. In me I beare a violent and mighty payse of love,
And no mans comming home againe to terrour may me move.
He never stepped backe agayne, the welkin skie to touch,
That swallowed once and sunke in gulfe and glummy cave did couch
Shut up in shimering shade for ay. Nu. Yet do not thou suppose,
Though dreadful Ditis lock with barres, and bolt his dongeon close :
And though the hideous hellicke hounde do watch the griesly gates,
Not Theseus alone shal have his passage stopt by fates.
Ph. Perhaps he pardon wil the cryme of loves procuring heate.
Nu. Nay churlishly hee would of old his honest wyfe entreate.
Antiope his bobbing buffets felt and heavy cuffe :
Suppose, yet thou can qualifye thy husbandes raging ruffe :
Yet who can move Hippolytus most stony stubborne mynd ?
He wil abhorre the very name detesting womankind,
And faring frantickly, wil gyve himselfe to single life,
And shunne the hated spousall bedde of every marride wife,
Then shal ye playnly understand his brutish Scithian blood.
Ph. To follow him even through the hilles, the Forrest thycke and wood,
That keepes among the clottred clives besmeard with silver Snow,
Whose nimble heeles on craggy rockes are frisking to and froe :

I wysh. Nu. He wil resist and not be dalyed with nor coyd,
Nor chaunge his chast estate, for lyfe of chastity devoyd,
And turne perhaps his cankred hate to light on thee alone,
That now he beares to all. Ph. Wil not he moved be with mone ?
Nu. Stark wilde he is. Ph. And I have learnd wilde thinges by love to tame.
Nu. Hee 'le runne away. Ph. If by the Seas he flie, I on the same
Will follow him. Nu. Remember then thy father may thee take.
Ph. I may remember myne offence, my mother eake wil slake.
Nu. Detesting womankinde, he drives and courseth them away.
Ph. No strumpets bashful feare agaynst my breast doth hold at bay :
Nu. Thy husband wil be here. Ph. I wis he comes I warrant him
Pyrothous companion in hellicke dungeon dimme.
Nu. Thy Father also he wil come. Ph. A gentle hearted Syre
Forgeving Ariadnes fault, when she did him require.
Nu. For these my silver shining lockes of horie drouping age,
And breast beduld with cloying cares restrayne thy furious rage,
I humbly thee beseech even by these tender teats of myne,
Succor thy selfe, much health it is, if will to health encline.
Ph. Not every jote of honesty exiled is my breast,
I yeeld me Nurse, love that denies thus under rule to rest
In quietnes, let him, let him perforce be battered downe.
I wil not let my fleeting fame and glorious bright renoume
With stayne to be dishonoured, this onely is the gap,
To shunne the perlous path that leades to vices trayning trap.
My spouse let mee ensue with death this sinne I shall subvert.
Nu. Deare daughter slake the ramping rage of thy unruly heart.
Plucke downe thy stomacke stout, for this I judge thee worthy breath,
In that thou dost confesse thy selfe to have deserved death.
Ph. Condemde I am to die, what kind of death now would I know,
As eyther strangled with a rope shal I my life forgoe ?
Or runne uppon a bloudy blade, with gory wound to dye ?
Or topste turvy headlong hurld downe Pallas turret hie,
In quarrel just of Chastity. Nu. Now strengthen we our hand,
Alas shal not my feble age thy despret death withstand,

Forbeare the sway of furye fierce. Ph. No reason can restrayne
Him that desireth death, when death he hath determind playne
And ought to die. Nu. Sweete Lady myne (thou comfort of my age
And feeble yeares) if in thy breast prevayles such mighty rage
Have not regard what sounding blast in trompe of fame be blowne
Whereby thy name in stayned stock of blacke reproch be sowne,
Or graft in spotlesse honesty : for fame doth favour small
The most upright, to better worse, to worse shee 's best of al,
Let us assay the froward mynd of yonder stubborne Child
It is my part to set uppon the clubbish youngman wilde
And to compell the sturdy lad with stony hart to yeeld.

CHORUS

O Goddesse great that art the wondrous seede
Of frothie surge in stormy raging seas
Whom flamy Cupid armd with scorching gleed,
And Shaftes, to call his Mother it doth please :
This wanton Elfe forth putting sappy might
From stedfast Bowe how surely doth he throwe
His venimd shaftes, through all thy marrow right
The foystring fyre doth rankle in and glowe
The secret flame that boyleth in each vayne
The strype layd on shewes not in open marke :
But inward marrow he sucketh out amayne,
This boy to sound of peace doth never harke.
His scattered shaftes ful nimble every where
He dartes aboute, the East that doth behold
The dawning sunne himselfe aloft to reare,
From purple bed, and whether late he rold.
With ruddy lamp, in Westerne wade doth glyde :
If any coast lye under scorching clawes
Of burning Crab, or people do abyde,
Beneath the clyme of Isy frosen pawes,
Of ougly gargle faced bigger Beare,
That wandring still from place to place doth goe

The fervent Fumes, and stoving heate eche where
That issues out from Cupid's burning bow,
The flashing flames of Yongmens burning brest,
Hee stirreth up, enkindling new the heate
Of quenched coales, that wonted was to rest
In drouping age : and virgins hearts doe beate
Wyth straunge untasted brandes : and doth compell
The Gods descending downe from starry Sky,
Wyth counterfeited Vysages, to dwell
Upon the Earth to blinde the Lovers Eye.
Sir Phoebus whilome forst in Thessail Land
To Sheepeherds state Admetus Heirdes did drive,
His mourning Harp deprivde of heavenly Hand
With orderd Pipe his Bullockes did revive.
Even hee that trayles the dusky riding rack,
And wieldes the swaying Poles with swinging swift
How oft did hee faynde fourmes put on his back
And heavenly Face with baser countenaunce shift.
Sometime a Byrde with silver shining wings,
He fluttering flusht, and languishing the death
With sweete melodious tuned voyce hee sings,
When silly Cygnus gave up gasping breath.
Sometime also wyth curled forhead grim
A dallying Bull, he bent his stouping backe
To maydens sport, through deepest Seas to swim
Whyle horny hove made shift like Ore slacke
Through waters wyld his brothers perlous cost
Wyth forward glauncing breast the stream he brake,
And least he should his tender pray have lost,
Her troublus thought did cause his heart to quake
Diana bright that swayes in circle murke,
Of darkened Sky, with frying fits did burne,
And leaving of the Evening watch her worke
Her fulgent Chariot bright, eke did shee turne.
To Phoebus charge, to weelde it otherwise
Her Evening Wayne Apollo learnde to guide,
And take his turne in lesser compast sise :
The dampish nights watcht not their wonted tyde

THE FOURTH TRAGEDY

And late it was ere that Aurora fayre
Set forth the morning Sunne with golde aray,
Whyle that the Marble axell tree in th' ayre
The shogging Carte made crake with swagging sway,
Alcmenas boystrous Impe did lay aside
His clattering shafts, and also did refuse
To weare the ramping Lyons hairy Hyde
And Emraudes for his fingers did hee chuse,
And brayded kept his rufled staring Locks,
Ware Garters wrought on knee with seames of Golde
And on his feete his durty dabled Socks,
And with the hand where whilome hee did holde
His Clubbish bat, a thred hee nimbly spun :
Both Persia and fertile Lidia knew
(Where golden sanded Pactolus doth run)
Alcydes bid the Lyons case adew
And thunderpropping brawny shoulderd sier
That heaved and bolstred up the Welkin throne,
In slender Kirtell wrought by Web of Tyre
Did jet about to please his Love alone.
This flame (beleve the heart that feeles the wound)
Enspirde with holines excels in might,
Whereas the Land by Seas embraced round,
Where twinkling Starres doe start in Welkin bright
This peevish Elfe the Countreys all doth keepe,
Whose quarrels sting the Marble faced rout
Of water Nimphes, that with the Waters deepe
The brand that burnes in breast cannot quench out,
The flying fowle doth feele the foystring flames.
What cruell Skirmish doe the Heyffers make?
Prickt up by lust that nice Dame Venus frames
In furious sorte for all the Cattels sake?
If fearefull Hearts their Hindes doe once mistrust,
In love disloyall then gladly dare they fight,
And bellowings out, they bray to witnesse just
Their angry moode, conceyv'de in irefull spright
The paynted coast of India then doth hate
The spotty Hyded Tygar, then the Bore

Doth whet his Tuskes to combat for his mate,
And fomes at mouth : the ramping Lyons rore
And shake their Manes, when Cupids corsies move :
Wyth grunts and grones the howling frythes doe murn :
The Dolphin of the raging Sea doth love :
The Elephants by Cupids blaze doe burn :
Dame nature all doth challeng as her owne,
And nothing is that can escape her lawes :
The rage of wrath is quencht and overthrowne,
When as it pleaseth Love to bid them paues :
Blacke hate that rusting frets in cankred breast,
And all olde grudge is dasht by burning love.
What shall I make discourse more of the rest
Stout Stepdames doth this gripe to mercy move.

THE SECOND ACTE

PHÆDRA, NUTRIX, HIPPOLYTUS

ECLARE what tidings bringst thou Nurce, where is Hippolitus ?

Nu. To cure this puissant breach of illes no hope there is in us :

Nor yet to quench his flashing flame : his furies fretting ire,

Doth fry in secret boyling breast, and though the smothering fire

Be coverte close, yet bursting forth in welked face it fryes :
The sparkling flakes doe glowing flash from bloudred rowling eyes.
She hanging downe her pouched groyne, abhors the lothsome light,
Her skittish wits and wayward minde can fancy nothing right :
Her faltring legs doe fayle her now, downe squatting on the ground
With sprauling lims her shittell griefe doth cast her in a swound :
Now scant shee on her lithy necke holdes up her giddy hed,
Nor can commit her selfe to couche in rest upon her bed.
Nor harbring quietnes in heart wyth drery dewle and plaint
She languisheth through out the night, and now her body faynt
She biddes them up to lift : and now her downe agayne to lay,
And now hir crispen locks undone abroade shee biddes display :
And strayt to wrap them up agayne. Thus fickle fansie still
Doth fleete, nor is contented with his wayward wandring will.
No care she casteth on her health nor eates one crum of breade,
With feeb¹e fumbling foote upon the floore eke doth she treade,
Her strength alas is quight consumde, her savor sweete doth faynt :
Nor ruddy sanguine purple deye her cherry cheekes doth paynt :
Wyth greedy gripes of gnawing griefe her pinched limmes doe pyne :
Her foltring legs doe stagger now : the glosse of beauty fyne

In body Alabaster bright is shronke away and wast.
Those Cristall Eyes that wonted were resemblance cleare to cast
Of radiant Phœbus gold arayes, now nothing gentry shyne :
Nor beare a sparke of Phœbus bright her fathers beams devyne :
The trickling teares tril down her chekes, dew dampish dropping still,
Doth wet her watrye plantes, as on the toppe of Taurus hill
The watry snowes with lukewarme shoures to moisture turnd do drop
But lo the Princes pallace is set open in the top :
She lying downe upon her golden bed of high estate
Hurles of hir wonted royal robes which wounded hart doth hate :
Ph. Maydes, have our purple garmentes hence, and vestures wrought with gold,
These crimson robes of scarlet red let not myne eyes behold.
And damaske weedes, wheron the Seres embrauder braunches brave,
Whose Silken substaunce gatherd of their trees aloofe they have,
My bosome shalbe swadled in with cuttied gaberdine,
No golden coller on my necke nor Indian jewels fyne,
The precious pearles so whyte shal hang no more now at myne eares,
Nor sweete perfumes of Siria shal poulder more my heares.
My flaring ruffled lockes shal dagling hang my necke aboute
And shoulder poyntes : then then apace it shattring in and out.
Let wyndes even blow it where it list, in left hand wil I take
A quiver of shaftes, and in my right a Boarespere wil I shake,
To cruell child Hippolitus such one his mother was,
As fleeting from the frosen Seas those countrey costes did passe,
And drave her heerdes that bet with trampling feete Th' Athenian soyle
Or like the trull of Tanais, Or like her wil I toyle,
Of Meotis that on a knot wounde up her crispen lockes :
Thus wil I trot with moonelike targe among the wodes and rockes.
Nu. Leave of thy bitter languishing unto the silie sort
(That walter thus in waves of woe) griefe gives not resting port
Is any measure to be found in thy tormenting fire :
Some grace at wyld Dianaes hand with sacrifyce require

THE FOURTH TRAGEDY

O Goddesse greate of Woods, in hilles that onely setst thy throne,
And Goddes that of the craggy clyves at worshipped alone,
Thy wrathful threatninges on us all now turne to better plight
O Goddesse that in forestes wyld and groves obtaynest might,
O shyning lampe of heaven, and then the Diamon of the Night,
O threefold shapen Heccate that on the world his face
Dost render light with torch by turnes, vouchsafe to graunt thy grace
To further this our enterprise and helpe our piteous case,
O mollify Hippolytus his stubborne hardned hart,
And let him learne the pangues of love and tast like bitter smart:
And yeeld his light allured eares: entreate his brutish breast,
And chaunge his mynd, in Venus boundes compel him once to rest.
So froward and untoward now so crabbed curst and mad:
So shalt thou be with blandishing and smyling countnaunce clad.
Thy shimering clowde cleane fading hence then brightly shalt thou bear
And glisteryng hornes, then whyle by night upon the whirling sphere,
Thy cloudy heeled steedes thou guydes, the raging witches charme
Of Thessal, shal not draw thee from the heavens nor do thy harme
No Shepherd purchase shal renoume. Thou comst at our request:
Now favour dost thou graunt unto the prayers of our Breast:
I do espye him worshipping the solemne Sacrifyce,
Both place and tyme convenient by Fortune doth arise:
We must go craftely to worke: for feare we quaking stand,
Ful hard it is the buysy charge of guylt to take in hand:
But who of Princes standes in awe, let him defye all right,
Cast of the care of honesty from mind exiled quight,
A man unfit is for the hest of King a bashful wight.

Hip. O Nurse, how chaunce thy limping limmes do crepe into this place?
With blubbred Cheekes, and leaden lookes, with sad and mourning face?
Doth yet my Father Theseus with health enjoy his life?
Doth Phædra yet enjoy her health my stepdam and his wyfe.

Nu. Forgoe these feares, and gently come thy blessed hap to take,
For care constrayneth me to mourne with sorrow for thy sake,

That hurtfully thou looudes thy selfe with pangues of plunging payne :
Let him rubbe on in misery whom destny doth constrayne :
But if that any yeld himselfe to waves of wilful woe,
And doth torment himselfe, deserves his weale for to forgoe
The which he knowes not how to use : tush, be not so demure,
Considering how thy yeares do runne, take part of sport and play,
Let mirry Bacchus cause thee cast these clogging cares away,
And reape the fruite of sweete delyght belonging to thy yeares,
For lusty youth with speedy foote ful fast away it weares.
Earst tender love, earst Venus feedes the young mannes appetite,
Be blyth my Boy, why Widow like liest thou alone by night ?
Shake of thy sollem sadnesse man that harty youth doth spill :
Huff, royst it out couragiously, take bridle at thy will.
Let not the flowre of plooming yeares all fruitles fade away.
God poynteth every tyme his taske, and leades in due aray
Each age by order just, as mirth the sappy youthfull yeares,
A forehed frayte with gravity becommeth hoary hayres.
Why dost thou bridle thus thy selfe, and dulles thy pregnant wit ?
The corne that did but lately sproute above the ground, if it
Be rancke of roote, yet in the huske, with enterest at large
Unto the hoping husbandman shall travel all discharge.
With braunched bough above the Wood the tree shall raise his top,
Whom rusty hand of canckred hate, did never spill nor lop.
The pregnant Wittes are evermore more prone to purchase prayse,
If noble heartes by freedome franckt be nourisht from decayes.
Thou churlish countrey Clowne Hodgelike not knowing Courtly life,
Delight in drousy doting youth without a loving wyfe.
Dost thou suppose that to this end Dame Nature did us frame,
To suffer hardnes in this world and to abyde the same ?
With courses and kerereyes set the prauncing Steedes to tame ?
Or bicker els with battails fierce, and broyls of bloudy warre ?
That soveraygne Syre of heaven and earth, when fates do us detarre,
With signes and plagues prognosticate provided hath with heede,
For to repayre the damage done with new begotten seede.
Go to, let bedding in the world be used once no more
(That stil mankind from age to age upholdes and doth restore).

The filthy world deformd would lie in yrksome ugly stay,
No floting ships on wambling Seas should hoysted Sayles display,
No Foule should skoare in azur Skie, ne Beast to woods repayre,
And onely whisking windes should whirle amid the empty ayre.
What divers dreery deathes drive one mankind to dumpish grave ?
The Seas, the sword and trayterous traynes whole countries wasted have :
Yet for to limit forth our league there is no destny thincke,
So downe to blackefast Stigian dampes we of our selves do sincke.
Let youth that never felt the joyes, in Venus lap which lie,
Alow the solitary life, what ever thou espye,
An hurliburly shall become for tearme of one mans life,
And worke it one destruction by mutuall hate and strife.
Now therfore follow natures course, of life the soveraygne guyde,
Resort unto the towne : with men delight thee to abyde.
Hip. No life is more devoyd of sinne, and free from grievous thralles,
And keeping fashions old, then that which leaving Townish walles,
Doth take delight in pleasant Woods, he is not set on fyre,
Enraged sore with burning Byle of covetous desyre.
Who hath addict himselfe among the mountaynes wilde to live,
Not prickt with pratling peoples bruite, no credit doth he geve.
To th' Vulgar sort disloyall still, unto the better part
Nor cankred rancour pale doth gnaw his blacke and fretting hart.
Nor fickle favour forceth he, he bound doth not obay
The payse of Scepter proude : but weildes the massy scepter sway
At ebbing honours gapes he not, nor moyles for fleeting mucke,
Removed farre from hovering hope and dread of backward lucke,
Not bitter gnawing Envy rancke teares him with tooth unkind,
Not quaynted with the mischiefe that in Cittyes and in mynd
Of people presseth thicke : nor quakes at every blast that flies
With guilty conscience to himselfe, nor frames himselfe to lies.
Nor covets rich with thousand pillers close his head to shroude,
Nor guildes his beams with glisteryng gold for fancy fond and proude,
Nor gushing streames of bloud upon his innocent Alters flow.
Nor Bullockes bright their hundred heads as whyte as flakie Snow,
Do yeeld to Axe, whyle scattered is on thaulter sacred grayne,
But al the quiet countrey round at wil he doth obtayne.

And harmles walketh too and froe amid the open ayre,
And onely for the brutish Beast contrives a trapping snare.
Another whyle uppon the swift Alpheus banckes he walkes
Now up and downe the breary Brakes of bushy woods he stalkes
Where lukewarme Lernas christall floud with water cleare doth shine,
And chaunging course his Channell out another way doth twyne :
And heare the piteous plaining Birds with chirping charmes do chide,
And Braunches trembling shake whereon soft windye puffes do glyde.
And spreading Beches old do stand, to fast and shake my shankes :
To stampe and daunce it doth me good on running Rivers bankes :
Or els upon a withred clod to steale a nap of sleepe,
Whereas the fountayne flowes amayne with gushing waters deepe.
Or els among the baulmy flowres out braying savours sweete,
Wheras with pleasant humming noise the bubbling brooke doth fleete.
The Apples beaten of the tree do ravening hunger staunch,
An Strawberyes gathered of the bush soone fill with hungry paunch.
He shoons assaultes, that doth himselfe from regall royall hold.
Estates do quaffe theyr dreadful drinke in Bolles of massye Golde :
How trimme it is water to lap in palme of naked hand :
The sooner drowsye Morpheus byndes thy Browes with sleepy bande :
The carelesse corpes doth rest at ease upon the hardest Couch :
The Cabin base hauntes not by Nookes, to prig and filch a pouch :
In house of many corners blynd his head he doth not hyde,
He loves to come abroade and in the light to be espyde :
The Heavens beare witnesse of his life, they lived in this wise.
I thinke, that scattred did of Gods in alder time arise.
No doting covetous blinde desire of Golde in them was found :
No stones nor stakes set up in field did stint the parted ground :
The sayling Ship with brazen Stem cut not the waltring wave,
But every man doth know his coast and how much he should have.
No hugy Rampires raysed were, nor Ditches delved deepe,
Nor countermured Castle strong the walled Townes to keepe.

The Souldier was not busied his blunted Tooles to whet,
Nor rapping Pellets, Cannon shot the barred Gates downe bet,
Nor soyle with yoaked Oxe was strainde to beare the cutting share,
The field even fertill of it selfe did feede the World with fare,
The plentifull aboundant Woods great wealth by nature gave :
A house of nature eake they had a dimme and darksome Cave :
The covetous minde to scrape up wealth, and despret furious ire,
And greedy Lust (that eggeth on the minde all set on fire.)
First brake the bands, and eger thirst of bearing sway stept in,
To be the strongers ravening pray the weaker did begin,
And might went for oppressed right : the naked Fist found out
To scratch and cuffe, to box and bum, with dealing blowes about.
The knarrie Logs, and snaggie shive were framed weapons strong,
The gatten Tree ungrayned was with Pikes of Yron long.
No nor the rusty Fawchon then did hang along the side,
Nor Helmet crest upon the head stood percking up for pride,
Pale spightfull griefe invented Tooles, and warlick Mars his braine
Contriv'de new sleights, a thousand kinde of deathes he did ordaine :
By meanes hereof eche Land is fild with clottred gore yshed,
With streames of bloud the Seas are dyde to hue of sanguine red,
Then Mischiefe wanting measure gan through every house to passe,
No kinde of vitious villany that practise wanted was.
By Brother, Brother reft of Breath, and eake the Fathers Life
By hand of Childe, eake murthred was the husband of his Wyfe,
And Mother lewde on mischiefe set destroyde their bodies seede.
I overpasse the Stepdame with her guilt and haynous deede.
And no where pitty planted is, as in the brutish beast :
But womankinde in mischiefe is ringleader of the reast,
The instrument of wickednesse enkindling first desire,
Whose vile uncesteous whoredome set so many Townes on fire.
So many Nations fall to warre, eake Kingdomes overthrowne,
And raysed from the ground, to crushe so many people downe.
Let other passe : by Jasons Wyfe Medea may wee finde
By her alone, that Women are a plaguy crabbed kinde.
Nu. Why, for one womans fault of blame shall every one have part ?
Hip. I hate, detest, abhore, I loth, I curse them from my heart.
Bee 't reason, right, or Natures law, or vengeance fury fell,
It likes me to abhorre them still : the burning fire shall dwell,

And bide with quenching water first, the daungerous quick Sand
Shall promise Ships with safetinesse upon the shold to land,
And Western Thetis soonke aloofe and drencht in deepest nooke,
Shall force the ruddy Morning Sunne from scarlet Skies to looke,
The Woolfe shall yeelde his fleering Chaps to suck the Tet of Do
Ere woon by womans love, to her I crouch and stoupe alow.

NU. Love bridles oft with snaffling bits the stubborne wayward heart,
Beholde thy Mothers native land in Scythia every part,
The salvage women feele the force of Venus yoaking band.
Thou onely Childe thy Mother had dost this well understand.

HIP. This onely comfort of my Mother must I keepe behinde,
That leefull unto me it is to hate all Womankinde.

NU. Even as the stiffe and sturdy Rocks have waltring waves wythstoode,
And dasheth backe from shore aloofe the fomy flapping floode :
So lightly he contemnes my talke : but Phædra runneth mad
Because of this my long delay with crushing cares yclad :
What will she doe ? Aye me alas how shall she now be spead ?
Her breathlesse body to the ground drops sodenly downe dead.
A sallow hue like gastly death overstrikes her frenzy Face,
Looke up and speake beholde thy deare sweete heart doth thee embrace.

PHÆDRA, NUTRIX, HIPPOLYTUS

ALAS to flote in Waves of woe who mee revives agayne ?
To pinch my minde with pining pangues and bitter brunts of payne.
What ease to mee it was, when as I lay in traunce at rest ?
Why dost thou thus the pleasure of renued lyfe detest :
O heart be bolde, assay and seeke thy purpose to attayne,
Be not abasht, nor faced out with churlish wordes agayne.
Who faintly craveth any boone, gives courage to deny :
The greatest portion of my crime dispacht ere now have I :
Shame seekes to late to purchase place within our bashfull brow,
Sith that in foule and lothsome love wee have delight ere now,
If I obtayne my will, then shall our wedlocke cloake the crime :
Successe corrupteth honesty with wickednesse sometime :

THE FOURTH TRAGEDY

HIP. Behold this secret place is voyde from any witnesse bye.
PH. My foltring tong doth in my mouth my tale begun denye.
Great force constrayneth mee to speake, but greater holde my peace,
O heavenly Ghostes I you protest, tis this that doth me please.
HIP. Cannot the minde that covers talke in wordes at will out brast ?
PH. Light cares have words at will, but great doe make us sore agast.
HIP. Mother the griefe that galles your heart come whisper in mine eare.
PH. The name of Mother is to proude a name for me to beare,
Importing puissant power too much : the fancy of my minde
It doth behove, a baser name of lesse renowne to finde.
Mee (if thou please) Hippolytus thy Loving Sister call,
Or wayting Maide, and rather so : no drudgry spare I shall,
If thou through thicke and thin in snowes to travaile me desire,
Or else commaunde mee for to runne through Coales of flaming fire,
Or set my foote on Pindus frosen Rocks, it yrkes mee not.
Or if thou will me rashly runne thorow scorching fire hot,
Or ravening routes of salvage beastes I will not slowly rest,
With gory Launce of naked blade my bowels to unbrest.
These Kingdomes left to mee in charge weild thou of them the sway,
And take mee as thy humble Mate, it fits mee to obay,
And thee to give commaundement, it is no womans feate,
To claime her Title to the Crowne, to raigne in Parents seate.
Thou flourishing amid the pryde of lusty youthfull race
Supply a valiant Prynces roome with Fathers golden Mace,
Protect thy humble suppliant, defend thy lowly Maide
Embrast in mercies bosome, at thy Feete so meeklye layde.
Take pitty on a siely Widdowes wo, and wretched plight.
HIP. The God that raignes aloft, forbid such lucklesse lot to light.
My Father Theseus safe in health will straight returne againe.
PH. The lowring Lord that deepe in strong infernal Gaile doe raigne,
And damned up alwayes to passe from Stygian Puddle glum,
Whereby to breathing bodies left alone the ground to cum,

Shall he let scape the Cloyner of his joyes from spousall bed,
Unlesse that Plutos fancy fond by doting love be led ?
Hip. The righteous Gods will make for him a right retourning way,
But while through feare our wavering wils in hovering Ballance sway,
Upon my brethren will I cast a due and earnest care,
And thee defend : beleve not that in Widdowes plight yee are :
And I my selfe will unto the supply my Fathers place.
Ph. O Love (alas) of credit light, O Love of flickring Face,
Is this inough that hee hath sayd ? entreatance will I try,
Deare chylde rue on my wretched woe, doe not my suite deny,
That lurcking close doth couch in secret mourning breast of mee,
Faine would I speake : yet loth I am. Hip. What mischiefe may this bee ?
Ph. Such mischief as ye would not think, could light in Mothers minde.
Hip. With mumbling voyce perplext yee waste your words against the winde.
Ph. A vapor hoate, and Love doe glow within my bedlem brest :
It raging ranke no inwarde juyce undried leaves in rest :
The fier sonk in skalded guts through every vayne doth frie,
And smothering close in seething bloud as flashing flame doth flie,
With egar sweeping sway along up burning beames on hie.
Hip. Enamorde thus with Love entiere of Theseus dost thou rage ?
Ph. Even so it is : the lovely lookes of Theseus former age
Which hee a sweete welfavorde Boy did beare with comly grace,
When prety dapper cutted Beard on cleare complexionde Face
Can sproute, on naked Chin, when hee the kennels clottred bloode
Beheld of mongrell Minotaur, and crooking Maze withstoode
By groping long untwined thredes the beames of bewty bright
That shone then in his Face, his crispen lockes with labels dight,
Smooth stroked lay, his scarlet Cheekes by nature paincted bright
Pouldred with spots of golden glosse, and sharpe assaults of Love
Prevayled in his fleshly armes : what grace doth shine above
In the Dianaes Face, or fiery crested Phœbus myne,
Or else in comely count'naunce of this lovely face of thine,
Such Theseus had when Ariadnaes Eye he did delight :
Thus portly pacing did he beare his noble head upright.

It is no counterfeyted glosse that shineth in thy Face,
In thee appeares thy manly Fathers sterne and lowring Grace.
Thy Mothers crabbed count'naunce eake resembled in some part
Puts in full well a seemelynesse, to please the Lookers hart.
The Scythian awfull Majesty with Greekish favour sweete
Appeares : if thou had with thy Syre attempt the Seas of Creete,
(One of those seaven from Athens sent elect by lucklesse lot
To pay such bloudy tribute, which King Minos of them got.
The ravening and bloudthirsty Minotaurus fowle to feede)
My Sister Ariadne would, for thee have spunne the threede.
Therewith in crafty compast Maze to leade thee to and fro,
In ugly Laberynthus long returning from thy Fo.
Thee, thee O Sister deare whereso in all the Heaven thou are,
And shinest bright with blasing beames transform'de into a Starre,
I thee beseech come succour mee with like distresse now cloyde :
Alas us siely Sisters twaine one kinred hath destroyde.
The Sire thy smart, the sonne hath brewd the bane that me doth lees.
Beholde an Impe of royall race layde humbly at thy Knees,
Yet never staynde, and undefilde, an harmelesse innocent,
To thee alone of all the Worlde my crowching Knees are bent,
And for the nones my hawty heart, and Princely courage stout
I did abate, that humbly thee with teares entreate I mought.
Hip. O soveraygne Sire of Gods, dost thou abide so long to heare
This vile abhomination ? so long dost thou forbeare
To see this haynous villany ? if now the Skies be cleare,
Wilt thou henceforth at any time with furious raging hand
Dart out thy cracking thunder dint, and dreadfull lightnings brand ?
Now battred downe with bouncing bolts the rumbling Skies let fall
That foggy Cloudes with dusky drouping day may cover all,
And force the backward starting starres to slide a slope wythall
Thou starry crested crowne, and Titan prankt with beamy blase
Come out, with staring bush upon thy kindreds guilt to gase.
Dash out and drowne thy leaming lampe eclisde in glummy Skyes,
To shrink in shimmering shape : why doth thy right hand not aryse
O guide of Gods and men ? how haps the worlde yet doth not burne,
Enkindled with three forked brand ? on me thy thunder turne,

Dash out on mee thy bobbing bolt, and let thy fiery flake
Whirlde out with force, burnt Cinders of my wasted Carcasse make :
For guilty (Jove) I guilty am, deserved death I have,
My Stepdames Fancy I have fed : shall I most sinfull slave,
Be worthy thought to blot my Fathers honorable Bed ?
Canst thou for mischiefe such through mee alone be lightly sped ?
O Caitive thou of womankinde for guilt that beares the bell,
Whose enterprised hainous evill doth passingly excell,
Thy Monster breeding Mothers fault with whoredome shee alone
Defilde her selfe, when storming sighes with sorrow gan shee grone,
Through beastly lust of Bull, till it the Minotaurus sier
In act of generation, had quencht her foule desier :
And yet the time concealed long, the grim twishaped seede
At length bewrayd with Bullike browes, thy Mothers naughty deede,
The doubted Infant did disclose : that wicked wombe shee bare.
With thrise, yea, foure times blessed Fate of lyfe depriv'de yee are,
Whom swolne of waltring Seas have sonck, me cankred hate of breath
Dispoyled hath, and traytrous traynes have quelde by daunting death.
With Stepdames banes and sorcery O Father, Father myne,
I rue thy lot, not to be slayne of milder Stepdame thyne.
This mischiefe greater, greater farre the wickednesse doth passe
That by Medea despret Dame of Colchis practisde was.
Ph. And I doe know, what uncouth luck upon our stock hath light,
The thing that we should shun, we seeke, it is not in my might
To rule my selfe : through burning fire runne after thee I shall,
Through raging Seas, and craggy Rocks, through fleeting Ryvers all,
Which boyling waters ruffling rayse, what way so goe thou will,
I bedlem Wight with frantick fits will follow, follow still.
O stately Lorde before thy feete yet fall I once agayne.
Hip. Doe not with shamelesse fawning Pawes my spotlesse body staine.
What meaneth this ? with hawsing mee t' imbrace she doth begin :
Draw, draw my sword, with stripes deserv'de Ile pay her on the skin :

Her hayre about my left hand wound, her head I backward wrike,
No bloud Diana better spent thine Aulter yet hath dyde.
PH. Hippolytus, now dost thou graunt to mee mine owne desire,
Thou cooles my ramping rage, this is much more than I require,
That saving thus mine honesty I may be geven to death,
By bloudy stroake received of thy hand to loose my breath.
HIP. Avaunt, avaunt, preserve thy lyfe, at my hand nothing crave,
This filed Sword that thou hast toucht no longer will I have.
What bathing lukewarme Tanais may I defilde obtaine,
Whose clensing watry Channell pure may washe mee cleane againe ?
Or what Meotis muddy meare, with rough Barbarian wave
That boardes on Pontus roring Sea ? not Neptune graundsire grave
With all his Ocean foulding floud can purge and wash away
This dunghill foule of stane : O woode, O salvage beast I say :
NUT. Thy crime detected is : O soule, why droupes thou all agast ?
Let us appeach Hippolytus with fault upon him cast :
And let us lay unto his charge, how he by might unjust
Deflowre would his Fathers Wyfe with mischiefe, mischiefe must
Concealed bee : the best it is, thy foe first to invade,
Sith that the crime is yet unknowne who can be witnesse made,
That either first wee enterprisde, or suffred of him then ?
Come, come, in hast Athenians, O troupes of trusty men
Help, help, Hippolytus doth come, hee comes, that Villaine vile,
That Ravisher, and Lecher foule, perforce woulde us defile.
Hee threatens us denouncing death, and glittering Blade doth shake,
At her who chastly doth withstand, and doth for terrour quake :
Lo headlong hence for life and death hee tooke him to his flight,
And leaves his Sword in running rash, with gastly feare afright :
A token of his enterprise detestable wee keepe,
Sirs chearish her, that storming sighes with pensive breast doth weepe.
Her ruffled hayre, and shattred Locks still let them daggle downe,
This witnesse of his villany so beare into the Towne.
(O Lady mine be of good cheare. Plucke up your sprights againe,)
Why dost thou tearing thus thy selfe abhorre all peoples sight ?
Not blinde Mischaunce but fancy wont to make a shamelesse Wight.

THE SECOND ACTE

CHORUS

Hippolytus even as the rageing storme away doth fly,
More swift than whirling Western wynde uptumbling cloudes in Sky,
More swift then flashing flames, that catch their course with sweeping sway,
When Stars ytost with whisking windes long fiery Drakes display.
Fame (wondring at of aldertime our Auncestours renowne)
Fare well with thee, and beare away olde worship from our Towne.
So much thy beauty brighter shines, as much more cleare and fayre,
The golden Moone with glorious Globe full furnisht in the Ayre
Doth shine, when as her fiery tips of wayning hornes doe close,
When lifting up her fulgent face in ambling Waine she goes,
Upon her nightwatch to attend, the Starres of lesser light
Their darckned Faces hide, as hee the Messenger of night
That watchword geves of th' evening tide and Hesperus hee hight,
That glading earst was bath'de in Seas, and hee the same agayne
When shades be shrunck, doth then the name of Lucifer obtayne.
Thou Bacchus blessed borne of Jove in warlicke India borne,
Thou Lad that evermore dost weare thy hayry bush unshorne,
Whose Javeling tuft with Ivy bunch, the Tygres makes adred,
And dost with labelde Myter use to pranck thy horny hed,
Hippolytus his staring Locks thou Bacchus shalt not stayne,
To woonder at thy loving lookes too much doe thou refrayne,
Whom (as the people doe report) the Ariadne bright,
For beauties name preferde before Bacchus that Bromius hight.
A brittle Jewell beauty is on mortall men employde,
Thou gift that for a season short of Mankinde arte enjoyde,
How soone alas with feathered foote hence dost thou fading slide?
The partching Sommers vapour hoate in Vers most pleasaunte pride
So withers not the Meadowes greene, (when as the scorching Sunne)
In Tropick ligue of burning Crab full hoate at Noone doth runne
And on her shorter clowdy Wheeles unhorseth soone the night.
With wanny Leaves downe hang the heads of withred Lillies whight,
The balmy bloomes and sprouting floure do leave the naked hed,
As beauty bright whose radiant beams in corauld Cheekes is spred,

Is dashed in the twincke of Eye : no day as yet did passe,
In which not of his beauty reft some pearles person was.
For Favour is a fleetyng thing : what wight of any wit
Wil unto frayle and fickle joy his confidence commit?
Take pleasure of it whyle thou mayst, for Tyme with stealing steps
Wil undermint, on howre past straught in a worser leps :
Why flyest thou to the wildernes, to seeke thy succour there?
Thy beauty bydes not safer in the waylesse woods then here.
If Tytan hoyst his totteryng Cart on poynt of ful midday,
Thee shrowded close among the brakes the Naids wil assay,
A gadding troupe that beautyes Boyes do locke in fountaynes fayre,
To frame their seate then unto thee in senseles sleepe repayre,
Shal wanton Fayries, Nymphes of Frithes, that on the Hilles do walke,
Which Dryads mountayne Goblins haunt, that use on hilles to stalke :
Or when from high Starbearing poale Diana downe did looke
On thee that next old Arcades in heaven thy seate hast tooke,
Shee could not weilde her weltring wayne, and yet no foggy cloude
Eclipst her gleaming Globe, but we with tincking Pans aloude,
Can make a noyse, agrised at her dead and glowing light
We deemd hir charmd with Magicke verse of Thessant witches spright.
But thou didst cause hir busines, and madest her in a maze,
Whyse at thy pleasant lovely lookes the Goddesse stoode in gaze,
That rules the rayne of cloudy night she stopt her running race,
God graunt that seldome byting frost may pinch this comely face.
Let seldome scorching Sunny beams thy Cheekes with freckles die :
The Marble blue in quarry pittes of Parius that doth lie,
Beares not so brave a glimsyng glosse as pleasant seemes thy face
Whose browes with manly majesty support an awful grace.
And forehead fraught with gravity of Fathers countnaunce old :
His Ivory colourd necke although compare to Phœbe ye would,
His lockes (that never lacking knew) it selfe displaying nyde
On shoulder poyntes doth set them out, and also doth them hyde.
Thy curled forhead seemes thee well, and eake thy notted hayre,
That crumpled lies undight in thee a manly grace doth beare.
Thou Gods (though fierce and valiant) perforce dost chase, and farre
Dost overmatch in length of limmes, though yet but young thou arre,
Thou beares as big and boystrous brawnes as Hercules : thy breast,
Then Champion Mars more bourly bolstred out with broader chest :

On back of hornie hoofed Steedes if vawting thou do ryde,
With Bridle in thyne active hand more handsome canst thou guyde.
The trampling Cyllar horse of Spart, then Princely Castor could,
Thy Letherne loope amid thy dart with former fingers hould,
And drive thy launce with all thy pith, the active men of Creete,
That with their pitched dartes afarre do learne the marke to hit.
They shall not hurle a slender Reede, but after Parthian guyse
To shoote an arrow if they list into the open Skies.
Unsped without some Bird attaynt it shal not light on ground,
Unbath'd with lukewarme bloud of guttes in gory smoking wound,
And from amid the lofty Cloudes downe shalt thou fetch thy pray :
Few men (marke wel the tyme) have borne beauty unplagude away.
God send thee better lucke, and graunt thy noble personage
May passe unto the happy steps and stretch to dumpish age.
What mischief unattempt escapes a Womans witlesse rage?
Most haynous crymes shee meanes to lay to guiltles youngmans charge,
And thinkes to make her matter good with hayre thus rent at large,
She towseth eake the pranking of her head with watred plantes,
Her slye devyse no crafty kind of womans fetches wantes.
But who is this that in his face such princely port doth beare?
Whose lofty lookes with stately pace hie vauntst his head doth reare?
Lyke lusty young Pyrithous, he looketh in the face,
But that a faynting fallow pale his bleakish Cheekes disgrace,
And filthy baggage hangeth on his hash hayre raysde upright,
Lo Theseus, it is agayne restoard to earthly light :

THE THIRDE ACTE

THESEUS, NUTRIX

T length I scapt the glowinge glades of grim eternall Night,
And eake the underpropping poale, that each infernall Spright
Doth muffle in, shut up in shades loe how my dazelled eyes
Can scant abyde the long deffered light of Marble Skies.
Eleusis now fowre offringes of Triptolemus devydes,
And counterpaysed Day with Night now foure tymes Libra hydes.
I earnest in my Parlous toyle in doubt what lucke to have
Twixt dread of gastly Death, and hope my feeble life to save,
Some sparke of life stil in my breathles limmes abyding was,
When as embarkt on erkesome Stix Alcides downe did passe,
To succour me in dire distresse, who when the hellicke hound
From Tartares griesly gates in Chaynes he dragd above the ground,
And also me he caryed up into the World agayne
My tyred limmes doth sappy pith of former strength restrayne,
My feble faltring legges do quake, what lugging toyle it was
From bottom deepe of Phlegethon to world aloofe to passe ?
What dreary dole and mourning noyse is this that beates myne eares ?
Let some declare it unto mee : who blubbred so with teares
Lamenting loud and languishing within our gates appeares ?
This entertaynment fit is for a guest that comes from Hell.
Nu. A stubborne heart and obstinate in Phedras breast doth dwell,
With despret mind to slay her selfe our teares she doth despyse,
And giving up the gasping Ghoast, alas my Lady dyes.

Th. Why should she kill herselfe ? why die, hir spouse being come againe ?

Nu. For this (my Lord) with hasty death she would her selfe have slaine.

Th. These troblous wordes some perlous thing I wot not what to tell.

Speake plain : what lumpe of glutting griefe her laded heart doth quel,

She doth complayne her case to none, but pensively and sad

She keepes it secrete to hir selfe, determind thus shee had,

To beare aboute with her the bane, wherewith she meanes to die.

Hie, hie thee fast, I pray thee now, now have wee neede to hye.

Our Pallace lockt with stately stoulpes set open by and by.

THESEUS, PHÆDRA

O Madame Mate of Spousall bedde thus dost thou entertayne

The comming of thy loving Spouse ? and welcom home agayne

Thy long desyred Husbandes face ? why takes thou not away

My Sword out of my hand, and dost not cheare my Sprites (I saye)

Nor shewest me what doth the breath out of the body chase ?

Ph. Alas my valiant Theseus even for thy royall mace,

Wherwith thy Kingdome thou dost weild, and by the noble raygne

Of thy belov'd posterity, and comming home agayne,

And for the worship that is due unto my fatall grave,

O let me die and suffer me, deserved death to have.

Th. What cause compelleth thee to die ? Ph. If I the cause of death

Disclose, then shall I not obtayne the loosyng of my breath.

Th. No worldly wight (save I my selfe alone) the same shall heare,

Art thou affrayd to tel it in thy husbandes bashful eare ?

Speake out, thy secretes shrowd I shall within my faythful brest.

Ph. What thou would other to conceale, kepe thou it first in rest.

Th. Thou shalt not suffred be to die. Ph. From him that wisheth Death,

Death never can be seperate. Th. The crime that losse of breath

Ought to revenge, shew it to me. PH. Forsooth because I live.
TH. Alas do not my trilling teares thy stony stomacke grieve ?
PH. It is the sweetest death, when one doth lothsome life forsake,
Bereft of such as should for him most woful weeping make.
TH. Stil standes she mum ? the croked, old, ilfavord, hoblinge Trotte,
Hir Nurse for stripes and clogging bandes shall utter every jotte,
That shee forbid her hath to tell : in yron chaynes her bynd,
Let tawing whips wring out perforce the secrets of her mynd.
PH. Now I my selfe wil speak : stay yet. TH. Why dost thou turne aside
From me thy weeping Countenance ? thy teares why dost thou hide
That gushing sodaine from thine eyes streame downe thy cheekes apace ?
Why hidest thou thy flowing floudes with Coate before thy Face ?
PH. Thee, thee, Creator of the Heavens to witnesse I doe call,
And thee O glittering fiery glede of Christall Sky with all,
And Phœbus thou from whom at first our royall Race hath roon.
With fawning face and flattring words in suite I was not woon.
For naked sword, and thundring threts, appauled was I not :
My brused bones abode the blowe, and stripes when sore he smote :
This blemish black of foule defame my bloud shall purge agayne.
TH. Declare what villaine is he that our honour so doth stayne ?
PH. Whom least yee would mistrust. TH. To know who tis, ful sore I long.
PH. This Sword wil tel, which sore afright when people thick in throng
Resorted fast, the Leacher vile for hast did leave behinde,
Because the people preasing fast he dreeded in his minde.
TH. Ah out alas, O woe is mee, what villany see I ?
Alas what uncouth Monster fowle of mischiefe I espy ?
Beholde the royall Ivory engravde and purtred fine,
Emboast with golden studdes, upon th' enameld Haft doth shine,
(The Jewell of Actea lande) but whyther fled is hee ?
PH. With light Heele running sore dismaide these servants did him see ?

Th. O sacred holinesse, O Jove betweene whose mighty hands
The Marble Poale with weltring sway in course directed stands,
And thou that second Scepter weilds in fomy fighting wave,
Why doth this cursed broode with such this wicked vengeance rave ?
Hath he bene fostred up in Greece ? or craggy Taurus wilde
Among hard rugged Rocks, and Caves, some savage Scythian Childe ?
Or else in brutish Colchis Ile by Desart Phasis flood ?
Cat after kinde hee is, and will th' unkindly Bastard blood
Returne unto his kinreds course, whence first his ligne hee clames.
This frantick fury up and downe comes of the warlicke Dames,
To hate the loyall leagues of love, and shunning long the use
Of Cupids campe, with tag, and rag, her body to abuse,
Become as good as ever twangd : O detestable kinde,
No better Soyle by any meanes can chaunge thy filthy minde.
The brutish beasts themselves doe loath th' abuse which Venus drawes,
And simple shamefastnesse it selfe observeth Natures lawes :
Where is the brag of Majesty, and fayned portly grace
Of manly minde, that hateth new, and olde things doth embrace ?
O double dealing life, thou clokes deceiptful thoughts in brest,
And settest out a forhead fayre where frounced mynd doth rest :
The saucie Jacke with bashful brow doth malipiertnes hide :
The rashnes of the despret Dicke by stilnesse is unspide.
With show of right religion knaves villany mayntayne,
And guileful mealemouthd Gentlemen do hold with speaking playne :
The daynty wanton Carpet Knights of hardnes boast and prate,
That Woodraunger, that brainsicke beast who liv'd in chast estate
An undefyled Bachiler thou rude and homely clowne,
Thus dost thou watch thy tyme, to breede this blot in my renowne ?
To make me Cuckold first of all did it delyght thy mynd,
First falling to thy spousall sport with mischiefe most unkind.
Now, now, to thee supernal Jove most hearty thankes I yeeld,
That with my first Antiope to dreary death I quelde,
That gone to dampish Stygian Dennes I left thee not behynd
Thy Mother : go, go Vagabond rawnge, rawnge, about to finde

THE FOURTH TRAGEDY

Straunge forraine soyles, and outcast landes aloofe at world his end,
And Iles enclosd with th' Ocean floud to hell thy soule shall send :
Beneath among th' Antipodes thy selfe of harbring sped,
Though in the utmost lurking nooke, thou shroude thy miching heade,
Above the grisly Pallaces thou climbe of lofty Poale,
Or maist above the clottring Snow advaunce thy cursed Soule,
Beyond the brunt of Winter flawes and threatning rigour passe
And stormy wrath with rumbling rough of ysie Boreas,
With vengeance, vengeance violent fast hurling after thee,
With daunting plagues and pestilence thy sinnes shal scourged bee.
For life and death, about the world in every lurking hoale,
O fugitive I shal not cease stil to pursue thy soule.
But seeke and search for thee I shall in landes that lye a farre,
Al corners blynd and caves shut up, Dennes lockt with bolt and barre,
A thousand wayes unpassable no place shal me withstand.
My cursinges blacke shal light on thee there where revenging hande
With weapon can not worke the harme : thou knowest that Neptune great
My Syre who flotes on floudes, and waves, with forked Mace doth beat
Geve licence freely unto me three boones to chuse and crave,
Which willingly the God hath graunt, and sworne I shal it have
Protesting ugsome Stygian Lake, and hallowed hath his vow :
O breaker of the wrastling waves, avouch thy promise now.
Let never more Hippolitus behold th' eclipsed light,
And for the Fathers wrathful rage the cursed child downe smight,
To waile among the gastly sprites o Father bend thy might,
To give (alas) this lothsome ayde unto thy needy Sonne,
I of thy Majesty devyne exact not to be donne.
This chiefest bone, til puissant payse of ylles do us oppresse :
In bottom deepe of boylyng Tartar pit, and sore distresse,
In grisly Lymbo Jawes nigh garglefaced Ditis dimme,
Amid the crumpled threatning browes of Hellick Pluto grim,
To claime thy promise made to mee, as then I didde refrayne,
Now Syre thy fayth by promise due perfourme to me agayne.

Yet dost thou stay ? why rumble not the waltring waves yet husht,
Through foggy cloude in dusky skies with stormy blastes outrusht.
Unfold the mantel blacke of Night, and roll away the Skies,
Enforce the fighting floods brast out with mounting waves to ryse.
And conjure up the water hagges that in the Rockes do keepe,
The Ocean surges swellyng hie cast up from bottom deepe.

CHORUS

O Nature Grandame greate of Heavenly Sprites,
Eake Jove that guides Olimpus mighty sway,
That rakes the race of twinckling heavenly lightes
On spinning Spheare and order dost for aye
The stragling course of roaming planets hie,
And weildes about the whirling Axeltree
The weltring Poales, th' eternal course of Skie
To keepe in frame, what workes such care in thee
That earst the cold which hoary winter makes
Unclothes the naked wood, and now agayne
The shades returne unto the breary brakes.
Now doth the starre of Sommer Lion raygne,
Whose scalded necke with boyling heate doth frie,
Perbraking flames from fiery foming jawes :
With scorching heate the parched corne do drie :
Ech season so his kindly course in drawes.
But thou that weildes these thinges of massy might,
By whom the hugy world with egal payse
Even Ballanced doth keepe in compasse right,
Each Spheare by measurd weight that justly swaise,
Alas why dost thou beare a retchles breast
Toward mankind ? not casting any care
That wicked men with mischiefe be opprest,
And eake to see that good men wel do fare
Dame Fortune topsieturvy turnes at wil
The world, and deales her dole with blinded hand,
And fosters vice mayntayning mischiefe ill.
Fowle lust triumphes on good men brought in band

Deceipt in stately Court the sway doth weild,
In Lordinges lewde the vulgar sort delight,
With glee to such the Mace of might they yeeld,
Some magistrates they do both love and spight,
And pensive vertue brought to bitter bale,
Receyves reward that doth of right aryse,
The continent to Prison neede doth hale,
The Leacher raygnes enhaunced by his vice.
O fruitles shame, O counterfayted port.
But what newes may this messenger now bring,
Who with maine pace comes poasting in this sort,
And stayes with mourning countnance at the Kinge

THE FOURTH ACTE

NUNTIUS, THESEUS

HEAVY happe and cruell chaunce of Servantes slavish state,
Why am I Poast to bring the newes of this il favord fate ?
Th. Be not abasht the ruthful wracke with courage to declare :
My breast agaynst the brunt of broyles stil armed I prepare.
Nun. My foltring tongue doth speach unto my glutting griefe denye.
Th. Our stocke with sorrow shuken sore what cares do crush escrie.
Nun. Hippolytus (ay woe is me) is slayne by doleful death.
Th. Now Father do I know my Sonne bereaved of his breath,
For why the Leacher life is lost : shew in what sort he dide.
Nun. In all poast hast as fugitive to shunne the Towne he hyde
Once having caught his cutting course apace he scuddes away,
His prauncing Palfrayes straite he doth with Collers close araye
With curbed bittes their snaffled heads at wil he brydles in,
Then talking much unto himselfe to curse he doth beginne
His native soyle : alas deare Father, Father stil he cryes :
And angry lasheth with his whip, whyle loose his Bridle lies :
Then sodenly a hugy swolve gan swel amid the deepe,
And starteth up into the starres no pipling wind doth sweepe
Along the Seas in Heaven so lith no noyse at all there was :
The Seas ful calme even as their kindly Tyde doth drive them, passe.
Nor yet no boysterous Southerne wynd the Sycill sand turmoyles.
Nor yet with fomie ramping surge the raging gulph up boyles,
Heavde up by Westerne puffes : when as the rockes with flappyng flash
Do shake and drownd Lucates clive the hoary fome doth dash.

The tombling waves togeather tost on hils are heaped hie,
The swelling swolve with Monster much to land alofe doth flye,
Nor only shaken ships in Seas do suffer wracke hereby :
The land in hazard lyes of stormes a waltring wave is rold
In tottering wise a wallowing gulph with winding compas fold,
Drives downe I know not what withall : a flat uprisyng new
An head above the water brim doth rayse the Starres to vew.
In foggie cloud eclipsed is Apollos dusky gleede,
And Scyros Rocks whom Trumpe of Fame advaunst by dreary deede
Corynthus take whom double Sea on eyther side assayle :
While greatly we agriefd, these thinges do languishing bewayle,
The belking Seas yell out the grunting Rockes with all do rore :
The stabby Clive doth reke, from whence the water ebde before,
It frothes, and keping course by course it spewes the waters out,
As doth Physeter fish (that flittes the Ocean Coast about)
And gulping doth from yawning throat his flouds of water spoute.
The shaken surge did tottre strayte and brake it selfe in twayne :
With wracke (more violent then wee did feare) it rusht amayne
Agaynst the shore, beyond the bankes it breakes into the land :
And hideous Monster followes : these for feare did quaking stand.
Th. What shape that uncouth Monster had and body vast declare.
Nu. A boasting Bull, his marble necke advaunced hye that bare,
Upraysd his lofty bristled Mayn on curled forhead greene
With shaggy eares prickt up his divers speckled hornes were seene.
(Whom Bacchus earst possessed had, who tames the Cattell wyld,
And eake the God that borne in flouds was bred a water Chyld)
Now puffing he perbraketh flames, and now as leaming light
With sparckling beams his goggle eyes do glare and glister bright.
His greasy larded necke (a marke for to be noted well)
With tough and knobby turnels hie out bumping big do swell.
His snorting Nostrilles wyde do grunt and yawning gulphes they sosse,
His breast and throtebag greenishly are dawbd with clammy mosse,
His side along begrymed is with Lactuse red of hue,
On snarling knots his wrinckled rumpe toward his face he drue,
His scaly haunch, and lagging tayle most ugly dragges hee up,
As Pristis in the deepe of Seas the swallowed Keele doth sup.

Or else perbraketh out agayne the undigested pup.
The earth did quake, the Cattel feard about the field do rampe,
The hunter starke with chilling feare beginnes to stare and stampe,
The heirdman had no mynd his scattrynge Heyfers to pursue,
The Deere amazed brake the pale and bad the Laundes adue.
But onely yet Hippolytus, devoyde of faynting feare
His neyng horses with the raynes of Bridles hard doth beare,
With wonted woordes he cheareth up his nymble Nagges afraide :
A steepe hie way at Argos lies with stony clives decaide,
That nodding overhangs the Sea which underfleetes that wayes :
That ugly Royle heere heates him selfe, and raging wrath doth rayse,
And kindling courage hoate, him force with burning breast assayes,
And chaufing efe himselfe before gan fret with angry hart.
Lo then into a scouring course on sodayne doth hee start,
With whirling pace he girding forth doth scarcely touch the ground,
Lighting a front the trimbling Cart with glaring Eyes hee glowmd.
Then also doth thy threatning Son with lowring browes upstart,
Nor chaungeth Countenaunce, but speakes with stout couragious hart.
This foolish feare doth not appaule my bold and hardned brest,
It comes to mee by kinde, that Bulls by mee should bee opprest.
His Steedes defying strait the Raynes plonge forward with the Cart,
As rage did prick them, sore afright beside the way they start.
This bias way among the Rocks they raunge, and wander wyde,
But as the Pylot (least the Barke should totter to one syde)
Doth beare it even in wrastling waves : so while his horses skip,
He ruleth them, now raines them hard, and now with winding whip
Free lashes on their buttocks layes : his Foe doth him pursue,
Now step by step, now meeting full agaynst his face hee flue.
Provoking terror every where. No further fly they might :
The horned beast with butting Browes gan run upon them right.
The trampling Gennets straught of wits doe straight way breake their ray,
The struggle striving hard to slip the Collar if they may.
And prauncing on their hinder Feete, the burden hurle on ground :
Thy Son flat falling on his Face, his body fast was bound,

Entangled in the winding ropes, the more he strives to loose
The slipping knots, he faster sticks within the sliding noose.
The Horses doe perceyve the broyle : and with the Waggon light
While none there is to rule the Raynes, with skittish feare afright
At randon out they ramping runne, (even as the Welkin hye
The Cart that mist his woonted waight, disdayning in the Skye
The dreery day that falsely was commit unto the Sun,
From off the fiery Marble Poale that downe askew doth run,
Flang Phaeton topsie torvey tost) his bloud begores the ground :
And dingd agaynst the rugged Rocks his head doth oft rebound :
The brambles rent his haled hayre : the edged flinty stones,
The beauty batter of his Face, and breake his crashing bones :
At Mouth his blaring tongue hangs out with squeased eyne out dasht,
His Jawes and Skull doe crack, abrode his spurting Braynes are pasht,
His cursed beauty thus defoylde with many wounds is spent :
The jotting Wheeles do grinde his guts, and drenched lims they rent.
At length a Stake with Trunchion burnt his ripped Paunch hath caught,
From rived Grine to th' Navell stead within his wombe it raught :
The Cart upon his Maister pawsde agaynst the ground ycrusht,
The Fellies stuck within the wounds, and out at length they rusht :
So both delay and Maisters limbs are broke by stresse of Wheeles :
His dragling guts then trayle about the wincing horses heeles.
They thumping with their horny Hooves agaynst his Belly kick,
From bursten Paunch on heapes his blouddy bowells jumble thick :
The scraiting Bryers on the Brakes with needle poynted pricks
His gory Carkas all to race with spelles of thorny sticks
And of his flesh ech ragged shrub a gub doth snatch and rent,
His men (a mourning troupe God knowes) with brackish teares besprent
Doe stray about the fielde, whereas Hippolytus was tore :
A piteous signe is to bee seene by tracing long of gore :
His howling Dogges their Maisters limmes with licking follow still :
The earnest toyle of woful Wights can not the coats up fill,

By gathering up the gobbets sparst and broken lumps of flesh.
Is this the flaunting bravery that comes of beauty fresh ?
Who in his Fathers Empyre earst did raigne as pryncely Peare
The Heyre apparant to the Crowne, and shone in honour cleare,
Lyke to the glorious Stars of Heaven, his Limmes in pieces small
Are gathred to his fatall Grave, and swept to funerall.
TH. O Nature that prevaylste too much, (alas) how dost thou binde
Whyth bonds of bloud the Parents breast ? how love we thee by kinde ?
Maugre our Teeth whom guilty eeke we would have reft of breath ?
And yet lamenting with my teares I doe bewayle thy death.
NUN. None can lament with honesty that which he wisht destroyde.
TH. The hugiest heape of woes by this I thinke to be enjoyde,
When flickering Fortunes cursed wheele doe cause us cry alas,
To rue the wrack of things which earst wee wished brought to passe.
NUN. If stil thou keepe thy grudge, why is thy Face with teares besprent ?
TH. Because I slue him, not because I lost him, I repent

CHORUS

What heape of happes do tumble upsyde downe
Th' estate of man ? lesse raging Fortune flies
On little things : lesse leaming lightes are throwne
By hand of Jove, on that which lower lies.
The homely couch safe merry hartes do keepe :
The Cotage base doth give the Golden sleepe.

The lofty Turrets top that cleaves the cloude
Withstandes the sturdy stormes of Southren wynde,
And Boreas boysterous blastes with threatning loud
Of blusteryng Corus shedding showres by kinde.
The reking Dales do seldome noiance take,
Byding the brunt of Lightninges flashing flake.

THE FOURTH TRAGEDY

Th' advaunced crest of Caucasus the great
Did quake with bolt of lofty thundring Jove :
When he from cloudes his thunder dintes did beat,
Dame Cybels Phrygian fryth did trembling move :
King Jove in hawty heaven ful sore affright
The nighest thinges with weapons doth he smyght.

The ridges low of Vulgar peoples house
Striken with stormes do never greatly shake :
His Kingdomes coast Joves thundring thumpes do souse :
With wavering winges that houre his flight doth take
Nor flitting Fortune with her fickle wheele
Lets any wight assured joy to feele.

Who in the World beholds the Starres ful bright,
And chereful day forsaking gastly Death,
His sorrowfull returne with groning spright
He rewes, sith it deprivde his Sonne of breath
He seeth his lodging in his court agayne,
More doleful is then sharpe Avernus payne.

O Pallas unto whom all Athens land
Due homage oweth, because that Theseus thine
Among us worldly Wights againe doth stand,
And seeth the Heavens upon himselfe to shine,
And passed hath the parlous myrie Mud
Of stinking Stygian Fen, and filthy Flud.

Unto thy ravening Uncles dreery Gaile
O Lady chaste not one Ghost dost thou owe,
The Hellick Tyrant knowes his perfect tale,
Who from the Court this shriking shrill doth throwe?
What mischiefe comes in frantick Phædras brayne
With naked Sword thus running out amayne.

HIPPOLYTUS

THE FIFTE ACTE

THESEUS, PHÆDRA, CHORUS

HROUGH pierst with pangues of pensivenesse what fury prickes thy brayne ?
What meanes this bloudy blade ? what meanes this shriking out amayne ?
And langishing upon the Corps which was thy mallice made ?
PH. O tamer of the wrastling waves mee, mee, doe thou invade.
The Monstrous hags of Marble Seas to rampe on mee send out,
What ever Thetis low doth keepe with folding armes about,
Or what the Ocean Seas aloofe embrace with winding wave :
O Theseus that to thine alies dost still thy selfe behave
So Currishly, O thou that for thy loving Friends avayle
Dost never yet returne : thy Sonne and Father doe bewayle
Thy pasport brought by death, and bloud, thy stocke thou dost destroy,
By love or hatred of thy wife thou workest still annoy :
O sweete Hippolytus thus I behold thy battred face,
And I it is, I wretch (alas) that brought thee to this case.
What Scinis forst thy lims so torne his snatching boughes to feele ?
Or what Procrustes rackt and rent thee streacht on bed of Steele ?
Or else what Minotaur of Crete that grim twishaped Bull
With horny head (that Dedalls dennes with lowing filleth full)
Hath thee in fitters torne ? (aie me) where is thy beauty fled ?
Where are our twinckling stars thine eyes ? alas and art thou ded ?
Appeare a while, receive my words, for speake I shall none yll :
This hand shal strike the stroake, wherwith thy vengeance quite I wil.

And sith that I, I Caitife, I, abridged have thy life,
Lo here I am content, to yeelde thee mine with bloudy knife.
If ghost may here be given for ghost, and breath may serve for breath,
Hippolytus take thou my soule, and come againe from death.
Behold my bowles yet are safe my lims in lusty plight,
Would God that as they serve for me, thy body serve they might,
Mine eies to render kindly light unto thy Carkasse ded,
Lo for thy use this hand of mine shall pluck them from my hed,
And set them in these empty cells and vacant holes of thine.
Thy weale of me a wicked Wight to win, do not repine.
And if a womans wofull heart in place of thine may rest,
My bosom straight breake up I shall, and teare it from my brest.
But courage stout of thine doth loth faint womans heart to have,
Thy Noble minde would rather go with manly heart to grave.
Alas be not so manly now, this manlinesse forbeare,
And rather choose to live a man with womans sprite and feare,
Then as no man with manly heart in darcknesse deepe to sit:
Have thou thy life, give me thy death that more deserveth it.
Can not my profer purchase place? yet vengeance shal thou have,
Hell shall not hold me from thy syde nor death of dompish grave.
Sith fates wil not permit thee life, though I behest thee mine,
My selfe I shall in spite of fate my fatall twist untwine.
This blade shall rive my bloudy breast, my selfe I will dispoile
Of soule, and sinne at once: through floods and Tartar gulphes that boyle,
Through Styx and through the burning Lakes I wil come after thee:
Thus may we please the lowring shades, receive thou heere of mee
The parings of my Poll and Locks cut off from forehead torne,
Our hearts we could not joyne in one, yet wretches now forlorne
We shal togeather in one day our fatall hower close:
If thou be loyall to thy spouse, for him thy life then lose:
But if thou be uncestuous, dye for thy lovers sake.
Shall I unto my husbandes bed agayne my corps betake,
Polluted with so haynous crime? O death the chiefest joy
Of wounding shame: Death onely ease of stinging Loves annoy:
We runne to thee: embrace our sowles within thy gladsome breast:
Harke Athens, harke unto my talke, and thou above the reste,

Thou Father worse unto thy Child than bloudy stepdame I.
False forged tales I told with shame, I fayning that did lye,
Which I of spite imagined, when raging breast did swarve :
Thou father falsly punisht hast him that did not deserve.
The youngman chast is cast away for myne uncestuous vice,
Both bashful he and guiltles was, now play thy wonted guyse.
My guilty breast with bloudy Launce of Sword deserv'd is riven.
The Dirge to th' dead to purge my spouse shal with my bloud be geven.
Thou father of the stepdame learne, what things thy Sonne should have
Of life deprived, as to lay his carkasse in a grave.
Th. O wanny Jawes of blacke Averne, eake Tartar dungeon grim,
O Lethes Lake of woful Soules the joy that therein swimme,
And eake ye glummy Gulphes destroy, destroy me wicked wight
And stil in pit of pangues let me be plunged day and night.
Now, now, come up ye Goblins grim from water creekes alow,
What ever Proteus hugie swolne aloofe doth overflow,
Come dowse me drownd in swallowes depe, that triumphe in my sinne :
And father thou that evermore ful ready prest hath binne
To wreake myne yre, adventring I a deede deserving death
With new found slaughter have bereft myne onely Sonne of breath.
His tattred lims I scatred have the bloudy field about,
Whyle th' innocent I punish doe, by chaunce I have found out
The truth of al this wickednes : heaven, starres, and sprites of hell
I pester with my treachery that me doth overquell.
No mischiefes hap remayneth more : iii. kingdomes know mee well :
We are returned to this World. For this did Hell unfold
His gates that burials twayne I might and double death beholde ?
Wherby I both a wyveles Wight and eakt a Sonles Sire,
May with one brand to wyfe and Sonne enflame the funeral fire.
O tamer of blackefaced light Alcides, now restore
Thy booty brought from Hel, redeeme to mee, to mee therfore
These Ghostes that now be gone, ah sinful wretch to death in vayne
I sue, most undiscrete by whom these wretched Wightes were slayne.

Imagining destruction sore aboute it wil I goe,
Now with thyne owne handes on thy selfe due vengeance do bestow :
A Pine tree bough downe straind perforce unto the ground alow,
Let slip into the open ayre shal cut my corpes in twayne.
From top of Scyrons Rockes I wil be tumbled downe amayne.
More grievous vengeance yet I have in Phlegethon River found,
Tormenting guilty Ghostes enclosd with fiery Channel round.
What pit and pangues shal plunge my soule already have I known,
That tyring toyle of Sisyphus that retchles rolling stone.
Let yeeld unto my guilty Ghost, and beyng layed on
These shoulders, these, these lifting handes of myne downe let it sway :
And let the fleeting floud aboute my lips deluded play.
Yea let the ravening grype come heare and Tytius paunch forsake,
For glutting foode with grasping Cleaze my liver let him take,
Encreasyng stil to feede the Foule, and for my tormentes sake.
And pause thou my Pyrothous Syre, and eke the snackle Wheele
That whirleth stil enforce my limmes thy swinging swift to feele.
Gape, gape, thou ground and swallow me thou cruell Chaos blynd,
This passage to thinfernall Sprightes is fit for me to find :
My Sonne I wil ensue, thou Prince of gastly ghostes in hell,
Dread not for chast wee come to thee : geve thou me leave to dwell
Among thy dreadful dennes for aye, and not to passe agayne.
Alas, my prayer at the Gods no favour can obtayne,
But if that mischiefe crave I should how ready would they bee ?
Ch. O Theseus to thy plaint eternall tyme is graunted thee :
Provyde thy Sonne his Obit rytes, and shroude in dompish grave
His broken lims, which Monsters foule disperst and scattered have.
Th. The shreadings of this deare beloved carkasse bring to mee,
His mangled members hether bring on heapes that tombled be :
This is Hyppolytus, I do acknowledge myne offence,
For I it is, that have deprived thee of life and sense.
Least that but once, or onely I should be a guilty Wight,
I Sire attempting mischiefe have besought my Fathers might.
Lo I enjoy my fathers gift, O solitarinesse,
A grievous plague when feeble yeares have brought us to distresse,
Embrace these lims, and that which yet doth of thy sonne remayne.
O woeful wight in baleful breast preserve and entertayne.

THE FIFTH ACTE

These scattred scraps of body torne O Syre in order set,
The straying gobbetts bring agayne, here was his right hand set :
His left hand here instructed well to rule the raynes must be.
His left syde rybbs (ful wel I know to be bewayld of mee
With bitter teares) as yet alas are lost and wanting still,
O trembling handes behold this woful busines to fulfil,
And withered Cheekes forbid your streams of flowing tears to runne
Whyle that the father do accompt the members of his Sonne.
And eke patch up his body rent, that hath his fashion lost,
Disfigured foule with gorye woundes, and all about betost :
I doubt, if this of thee be peece, and peece it is of thee :
Here, lay it here, in th' empty place, here let it layed be,
Although perhap it lye not right : (aye me) is this thy face ?
Whose beauty twinckled as a starre, and eake did purchase grace,
In sight of Foe procurd to ruth. Is this thy beauty lost ?
O cruell will of Gods, O rage in sinne prevayling most.
Doth thus the Syre that great good turne perfourme unto his sonne ?
Lo let thy fathers last farewel within thyne eares to runne,
My child whom oft I bid farewell : the whilst the fire shall burne
These bones, set ope his buriall bower, and let us fall to mourne
With loude lamenting Mopsus wise for both the coarses sake :
With Princely Pompe his funerall fire see that ye ready make,
And seeke ye up the broken parts in field dispersed round,
Stop hir up hurlde into a Pit, let heavy clodds of ground
Lie hard upon hir cursed hed.

FINIS

ŒDIPUS

THE FIFTH TRAGEDY OF SENECA

ENGLISHED THE YEAR OF OUR LORD
MDLX.
BY ALEXANDER NEVYLE

To the Right Honorable

MAISTER DOCTOR WOTTON

one of the Queenes Majesties privy Counsayle:

Alexander Nevyle wisheth Helth,

with encrease of Honor.

THIS sixtenth yeare of myne age (righte honorable) reneweth a gratefull memory of your great goodnes towardes mee: (for at Baptisme your honor vouchsafed to aunsweare for mee): and causeth mee thus boldly to present these greene and unmelowed fruicts of my first travailes unto you: as signes and testimonies of a well disposed minde unto your honor. Albeit when first I undertoke the translation of this present Tragœdy, I minded nothing lesse, than that at any tyme thus rudely transformed it shoulde come into the Printers hands. For I to none other ende removed him, from his naturall and lofty style, to our corrupt and base, or as some men (but untruly) affyrme it, most barbarous Language: but onely to satisfy the instant requests of a few my familiar frends, who thought to have put it to the very same use, that Seneca himselfe in his Invention pretended: Which was by the tragicall and Pompous showe upon Stage, to admonish all men of their fickle Estates, to declare the unconstant head of wavering

THE EPISTLE

Fortune, her sodayne interchaunged and soone altered Face: and lyvely to expresse the just revenge, and fearefull punishments of horrible Crimes, wherewith the wretched worlde in these our myserable dayes pyteously swarmeth. This caused me not to be precise in following the Author, word for word: but sometymes by addition, somtimes by subtraction, to use the aptest Phrases in geving the Sense that I could invent. Whereat a great numbre (I know) will be more offended than Reason or Wysedome woulde they should bee. Thus as I framed it to one purpose: so have my frends (to whom I can not well deny any thyng that Frendshyps ryght may seeme justly to requyre) wrested it to another effect: and by this meanes blowen it abroade, by overrash and unadvised printing. By whych fond deede I know undoubtedly I shall receyve the poysoned infamies, of a number of venemous tonges. Wherefore (ryght honorable) as I geve these the first Fruicts of my travayle unto you: declaring therein the great goodwyll and duety that I owe unto your Honor, for the noble disposition of your vertuous mynde: so am I driven humbly to require your strong ayde, and assured defence agaynst the sclaunderous assaults of such malicious mouths, which obtayned: I shalbe the better encouraged agaynst an other time, to bestow my travaile in matters of farre greater weighte and importaunce. In the meane season (desiring your Honour to take these simple Attemptes of myne in good part:) I leave you to the tuition of the right high and mighty God: Who keepe you long in health, and graunt you many happy yeares: with encrease of Honor.

All your Honours to commaund.

Alexander Nevile.

ŒDIPUS

THE PREFACE TO THE READER

EHOLD here before thy Face (good Reader) the most lamentable Tragedy of that most Infortunate Prince Œdipus, for thy profit rudely translated. Wonder not at the grosenesse of the Style: neyther yet accounte the Inventours Dylygence dysgraced by the Translators Neglygence: Who thoughe that he hath somtimes boldly presumed to erre from his Author, roving at randon where he list: adding and subtracting at pleasure: yet let not that engender disdaynefull suspition with in thy learned breast. Marke thou rather what is ment by the whole course of the History: and frame thy lyfe free from such mischiefes, wherewith the World at this present is universally overwhelmed, The wrathfull vengeaunce of Gód provoked, the Body plagued, the mynde and Conscience in midst of deepe devouring daungers most terribly assaulted, In such sort that I abhorre to write: and even at the thought thereof I tremble and quake for very inward griefe and feare of minde: assuredly perswading my selfe that the right high and immortall God, will never leave such horrible and detestable crimes unpunished. As in this present Tragœdy, and so forth in the processe of the whole hystory, thou maist right well perceyve. Wherein thou shalt see, a very expresse and lively Image of the inconstant chaunge of fickle Fortune in the person of a Prince of passing Fame and Renown, midst whole fluds of earthly blisse: by meare misfortune (nay rather by the deepe hidden secret Judgements of God) piteously plunged in most extreame miseries. The whole Realme for his sake in straungest guise grevously plágued: besides the apparaunt destruction of the Nobility: the generall death and spoyle of the Comminalty: the miserable transformed Face of the City, with an infinite number

THE PREFACE TO THE READER

of mischiefes more, which I passe over unrehersed. Onely wish I all men by this Tragicall hystory (for to that entent was it written) to beware of Synne: the ende whereof is shamefull and miserable. As in the most infortunate fall of this unhappy Prince right playnely appeareth. Who by inward gripe of fearefull consuming Conscience wretchedly tormented: beholding the lamentable state of his vile infected Realmes, wasted by the burning rage of privy spoyling Pestilence, finds himselfe in tract of time, to be th' onely plague and misery of the almost quight destroied City. Whereupon calling together his Priests and Prophets, and asking counsaile of the Gods by them, for present remedy in those evils, wherewith the Realme was then universally overflowen: aunswere was made that the Plague should never ceasse, till king Laius death were throughly revenged: and the bloudy Murtherer driven into perpetuall exile. Which aunswere received, Œdipus, farre more curious in bowlting out the truth, than carefull of his own Estate: sodainly slides into an innumerable company of dredfull miseries. For as soone as he had once the perfect vewe of his own detestable deedes, and wicked misdemeanour cast before his eyes, together with the unnaturall killing of his Father Laius, the incestuous Mariage of his Mother Jocasta, the preposterous order of his ill misguyded lyfe, with a hundred moe like mischiefes, which chaste and undefiled eares abhorre to heare: fretting Fury common enemy and tormentor to corrupted consciences pricking him forward, all inflamed with Phrensie and boyling in inward heate of vile infected minde, hee rooteth out his wretched eyes unnaturally, bereaveth his Mother her life (though earnestly requested thereto) beastly, and in the ende in most basest kind of slavery, banisht, dieth miserably. Leaving behind him unto all posterities, a dreadfull Example of Gods horrible vengeaunce for sinne. Such like terrors as these requireth this our present Age, wherein Vice hath chiefest place, and Vertue put to flight, lies as an abject, languishing in great extremity. For the which cause, so much the rather have I suffred this my base translated Tragœdy to be published: from his Author in word and verse somewhat transformed, though in Sense litle altered: and yet oftentimes rudely encreased with mine owne simple invention: more rashly (I confesse) than wisely, wishing to please all: to

offend none. But whereas no man lives so uprightly, whom slaundring tonges leave undiffamed, I referre my selfe to the Judgement of the wisest, litle esteeming the prejudiciall mouthes of such carping Marchaunts, whych suffer no mens doings almost to scape undefiled. In fine, I beseech all to gether (if so it might be) to beare with my rudenes, and consider the grosenes of our owne Countrey language, which can by no meanes aspire to the high lofty Latinists stile. Myne onely entent was to exhorte men to embrace Vertue and shun Vyce, according to that of the right famous and excellent Poet Virgil

Discite justiciam moniti, et non temnere divos.

This obtayned: I hold my selfe throughly contented: In the meane season I ende: wishing all men to shun Sin, the plaine (but most perilous) pathway to perfect infelicity.

A. Nevile.

THE SPEAKERS NAMES

Œdipus.	Jocasta.
Chorus.	Creon.
Tiresias.	Manto.
Sanex.	Phorbas.

[Nuntius].

THE FIRST ACTE

ŒDIPUS the King, JOCASTA the Queene

HE Night is gon: and dredfull day begins at length t' appeere:
And Phœbus all bedim'de with Clowdes, himselfe aloft doth reere.
And glyding forth with deadly hue, a dolefull blase in Skies
Doth beare: Great terror and dismay to the beholders Eyes.
Now shall the houses voyde bee seene, with Plague devoured quight:
And slaughter that the night hath made, shall day bring forth to light.
Doth any man in Princely throne rejoyce? O brittle Joy,
How many ills? how fayre a Face? and yet how much annoy
In thee doth lurke, and hidden lies? what heapes of endles strife?
They judge amisse, that deeme the Prince to have the happy life.
For as the Mountaynes huge and hie, the blustring windes withstand,
And craggy Rocks, the belching fluds do bash, and drive from land:
Though that the Seas in quiet are, and calme on every side:
So kingdoms great all Windes and Waves of Fortune must abide.
How well shund I my Father deare Polybius Scepters late?
Exil'de, bereft of carefull feare, in Pilgrims happy state:
I call the Gods to witnes this, and Stars that glyde in Skyes.
A kingdome is befauln to mee, I feare least thereof ryse
A mischiefe, (mighty Jove,) to great I feare, alas I feare
Least these my handes have reft the life, of thee my Father deare.
Apollo byds mee this beware, and yet a mischiefe more
Foretels. Joc. Can any greater bee than that you tolde before?

Of Father slayne by sonnes own hand ? Œd. (O thrice unhappy state.)
With horror all dismaide I stand in dred of threatned fate.
I am ashamed my destnies fowle (O Queene) to thunder out,
And openly to blase my feare my trembling minde doth dout :
Yet out it goes. Phœbus me bids my Mothers Bed to fly,
As though that I her Sonne, with her incestuously should ly.
This feare, and onely this me causde my fathers kingdome great
For to forsake. I fled not thence when feare the minde doth beat.
The restlesse thought still dreds the thing, it knows can never chaunce.
Such fansies now torment my heart, my safety to advaunce,
And eke thyne ever sacred lawes (O Nature) for to keepe
A stately Scepter I forsooke, yet secret feare doth creepe
Within my breast : and frets it still with doubt and discontent,
And inward pangues which secretly my thoughts a sunder rent.
So though no cause of dred I see, yet feare and dred I all,
And scant in credit with my selfe, my thoughts my minde appall
That I cannot perswaded be though reason tell mee no,
But that the Web is weaving still of my decreed wo.
For what should I suppose the cause ? a Plague that is so generall,
And Cadmus country wholy spoyles, and spreds it selfe through all ?
Should mee, amongest so huge a heape of plagued Bodies spare ?
And we alone amongst the rest reservde to mischiefes are ?
O heavy hap. And bide I stil alone the spoyle to see ?
Of Cities great, of men, of beasts, by plague that wasted bee ?
And thou amongst so many ils, a happy lyfe to lead,
Couldst once perswade thy selfe (O wretch) without all feare or dread.
Of Phœbus secret Judgements to, and that in Kinges estate ?
Thou, thou, infected hast the ayre, in such a filthy rate.
Thou art the onely cause of woe : by thee these evils rise,
By thee to grave on such a sorte, this wretched people plies.
The firy flaming frying heate, afflicted hearts that wasts,
Is not relievde as wont it was by cold and pleasaunt blasts.
The gentle western windes have left with healthful puffes to blow,
And now the fiery Dog with blase of boyling heate doth glow.

THE FIFTH TRAGEDY

The Sunne in Leo burns so hoate, and so the earth doth broyle,
That fluds and hearbes are dryed up, and nought remaynes but soyle,
So throughly scorcht and stued with heate, that moisture all is gone,
And now amongst so many fluds, remaynes alas not one.
The places dry are onely seene the streames are drunken up.
And water that doth yet remayne : the soaking Earth doth sup.
The Moone with clowds quight over cast, all sadly forth she glides,
And dolefull darksom shades of night, the whole worlde overhides.
No Star on high at all doth shine, but black and hellike hue
Hath overshaded all the Skyes, whence deadly mists ensue.
The corne that wonted was to growe and fruitfully to spring,
Now to the voyded Barnes nought els, but empty stalkes doth bring.
No part of all our kingdome is free from destruction :
But all together run and rush, to utter confusion.
The old men with the yong (alas :) the Father with the chylde
The plague consumes. Both man and wife, all beasts both tame and wylde
Are spoyled by the Pestilence. No pompe at all remaynes,
That wonted was in Funeralles, to ease the mourners paynes.
Alas this spoile of people made, by plague hath dryde myne eyes :
And secretly within my breast, the griefe it boyling fryes.
And that, that wonted is to hap, in most extremest ills :
My teares are dry and glutting griefe my wretched breast it fills.
The crased father beares the sons, unto theyr dampish graves :
And after him with burden like, the Mother comes and raves :
And even lamenting as they stand, starck dead downe both they fall,
And mourners new in like estate, for them and theirs they call.
Who likewise in the midst of all their toyle and paynfull payne
Do drop into the grave they digd, and so the place doe gayne
That was prepar'de for others erst. A hell it were to heere
The horror, and the miseries that every where appeere.
A Tombe is made for noble men, fast on the people hie.
And in, their burdens fling. Great Pieres all unregarded lye
For lack of Graves, to Ashes cleane their bodyes some doe wast :
And some halfe burnt doe leave them there, and home away for hast

They run, and more they fetch, and then wood, fier, grave, and all
Doth want. And downe for very griefe the wretched mysers fall.
No prayers availe. No Arte can help this raging Plague t' appease :
For none almost is left alive each others woe to ease.
Before thine aulters heere O God my feeble hands I hold,
Requiring all my destinies, at once with courage bold.
And that by death I may prevent, my Countrey prest to fall.
For this, and only this (O God) upon thy name I call.
Let mee not be the last that dies : The last that goes to Grave.
Graunt this, and then (O mighty Jove) my full request I have.
O cruell Gods unkinde : O more than thrise unhappy Fates :
That onely mee denied is, that lyghtes on all Estates.
I meane a speedy death (alas) these evils to prevent,
And deadly woes that doe my heart with restlesse rage torment.
Leave of thy blubbering teares (O foole,) and fly these kingdomes foylde
With rotten plagues and Botches vile, and graves ech where dispoylde.
All which diseases thou unhappy guest didst bring with thee
Dispatch. Away. Goe hence. At least, unto thy parents flee.
Joc. What bootes it Sir these mischiefs great with piteous plaints to aggrevate.
Stoutly to beare adversity, is fitste for Kings estate.
When dred and daunger most assayle : when cruell Cares doe crush
Thy princely breast. Then oughtst thou most to beare and bide the push.
It is no poinct of courage stout to yeelde to fortunes frown.
Œd. Nay. Feare could never cause mee stoupe nor Fortune cast mee down.
My manly minde was never thraule to vaine and peavish feares,
But evermore in each assault, it pryncely courage beares.
No not a thousand glistering swords, nor Mars himselfe in fielde,
Can once dismay my Countenaunce, or cause my heart to yeelde.
The very Giaunts fierce and huge in fight withstand I dare.
That Monster Sphinx whose riddels through the world renowmed are,
Could not dismay my dredles heart, nor cause my courage slide
For all the terrors I beheld, I did that Fury byde.

I saw him belching Gubs of bloud, I viewde full well the fielde
That all to spatterd lay with bloud, and bones quight overheelde.
And when that he on Mountaynes top with mouth full huge to see,
Stoode gaping all with greedy Jawes to feede and pray on mee,
Oft fluttering with his fearefull wynges and shaking oft his tayle,
Began full like a Lyon fierce with threates mee to assayle.
Of whom straight way the Riddell I, it rusht into myne eares
With roring sound His winges he claps, the Rock for hast hee teares,
Desiring with my Bowels still his greedy Jawes to glut :
But I full soone assoyled had the question that he put.
And all the subtile poincts thereof, and twisted knots untwinde.
Joc. What makes you wish for death to late, and waste your wordes in wind.
You might have died than (you know) for Sphinx so noble slain.
This kingdom unto you, and yours for ever shall remain.
Œd. The ashes of that Monster vile, agaynst us doth rebell.
That vile mishapen lothsome Beast, that raging Feend of Hell,
Is cause of all the plague that doth this mournfull City smight.
Now only this remaynes alone, if Phœbus heavenly might,
Can any meanes invent for us, or way of mercy make :
Whereby these burning Plagues at length may haply chaunce to slake.

CHORUS

O more then thrise renowmed Stock of auncient Cadmus Race.
O mighty Thebes City great, O heavy ruthfull Case.
Loe now you lye all desolate, with Plague devoured quight.
Both you and all your Husbandmen. (*O miserable sight.*)
O fowle and fearefull Fate (*alas*) *what causeth all this wo?*
O God whence springs this Pestylence that us tormenteth so?
No age, no shape, no forme is sparde, but all confounded lye.
Thus happiest now the man I count, whose chaunce was first to dye.
For hee hath shund a thousand ills, which wretched Eyes have seene :
And mischiefes great that us doe presse from him are taken cleane.
O God withhold thy fury great, thy Plagues from us remove.
Ceasse of afflicted Soules to scourge, who thee both serve and love.

Powre downe on them diseases fowle, that them deserved have.
A Guerdon just for sinne (Oh God) this this of thee wee crave,
And onely this. We aske no more, the cause and all is thyne,
A thing not usde of Gods it is, from pity to declyne.
My heart doth pant, and trembling cold through all my lims doth run,
As oft as I remembring, count the noble Stockes undun,
By death and dolfull destenies that overwhelmed lye,
And yet alas the people stil to Grave doe faster hye.
In long Aray all in a rancke by thousandes on a roe,
On every side, in every streate to buriall fast they goe.
The seven broade wyde open Gates, are not enough for way,
But throngd the people pestred stand still in a fearefull stay,
And in the mydst of all theyr toyle with corses on their backes,
The number that before doth poast the hinder number slackes.
The corses in the streates doe lye and Grave on Grave is made,
But all in vayne. For nought it boots, the plague cannot be stayde.
The sacrifices don to Gods have to to ill successe,
And such straunge sights and signes doe rise that nought els I can gesse,
But that at hand with gastly paves, is utter destruction,
With thousand ills accompayned and extreme confusion.
The sheepe of rot by heapes as thick, as dogges doe fall and dye,
And belching out their wasted lunges, on grounde doe sprawling lye.
And I my selfe of late did see : (a sight unseene before,)
As our high priest stoode sacrifising at the Temple dore,
And strake with grievous bloudy wound the golden horned Bull
When downe with liveles lump he drops and members made full dull.
And all the wounde wide bleeding gapes and black goard bloud out spues.
And yet the blade unsprinckled was. The bloud it boyling stues
And bubbles on the ground. Alas what do these things portend?
Oh mighty Jove at length vouchsafe some good and happy end,
At length withhold thy hand (O God) and health unto us send.
Nothing (alas) remaynes at all, in wonted old estate,
But all are turned topset downe, quight voyd and desolate
The faynting horse for sodayne paine from back his burden lats,
And after on his maisters brest his liveles lyms he squats :
Who cries for help : but all in vain the beastes in field that bide
Unkept : unknowen wayes and paths do raunge and overstride.

THE FIFTH TRAGEDY

The Bull for lacke of foode and meate in field all faintyng lyes,
And all his flocke dispersed quight, the sely Shephard dyes.
The herdman eke amongst his beasts his fatal breath expiers
And to the heavens with piteous cries, commends his last desiers.
The Harts without all feare of wolves do lyve in wretched peace.
The rage, and wrathful roring sounds of ramping Lions cease.
The vengeaunce wyld outragious Beares are now as tame as sheepe
The ugly Serpent that was wont, the Rocky Dennes to keepe.
Oft quaffing poisoned Venom sups in inward heat shee boyles.
And all inflamed and schorcht, in vayne for lenger lyfe she toyles.
The woods are not adourned now, with fresh and lyvely hue,
The wonted shades are gon. All things are quight out of their Que :
No greenish grasse on ground doth grow, the earth no moisture soupes,
The Vine withouten any sap, his drowsy head down drowpes.
What shal I say ? all things (alas) are writhen out of course,
And as they seeme to me, are lyke, to fare still worse and worse.
O mighty God above ? when ende these everduryng yls ?
When cease these plages ? that giltles bloud thus fierce and raging spils ?
I thinck but we almost alyve, there do no men remayne :
Whom dolful Darts of Destenies, on earth have left unslayne
I thinke the darcksome shades of hell where filthy fluds do flow,
Where plages and vile diseases too, where dredfull horrors grow,
And all the furies brasten loose do mischiefes on us throw,
With Botch and blane of sundry kindes which sothern blasts do blow,
And wrekful vexed hagges of hell do breath and on us bringe :
The angry fendes of hell I thinke their vengeanuce on us flinge
And out their mortall poyson spue which they agaynst us beare,
Lo see how greedy death on us with scowling eyes doth leare.
See, see. Oh Jove how fast hee throwes his Dartes. Not one he spares
But all confounds. His thretning force, withstand no Creature dares.
No doubt the lothsom Feryman the sinfull soules that traynes
Through stincking fluds, his labour loths that he for us sustaynes.
Such presse by plumps to him is made which still renews his paynes.
But harke yet monsters more then these, the Fame abroade doth fly
That hellishe Dogges with bawling sound were heard to howle and cry,
And that the ground with trembling shooke, and under feete did move.
And dreadfull blasing Comets bright were seene in Skies above.

And gastly shapes of men besides, to wander on the ground.
And wood, and trees on every syde, did fearefully resound.
Besides all this straung Ghosts were seene in places where they stoode
And Ryvers more then one or two, that ran all blacke goord bloode.
O cruell plague, O vile disease, farre worse then speedy death.
O wee unhappy thrise and more, who doe prolonge our breath
In these accursed dayes and tymes. But harke to mee a while.
When first this lothsome plague begins these Mysers to defile,
It takes them thus. A feareful Cold through al their bones doth run,
And Cold and Heate togeather mixt, their sences all venome.
Than litle lothsome markes appeare, and all their bodies spot.
And all their members flaming glow, and burning fast doe rot.
The Lights, the Lungs, the heart, the Guts, and all that inwarde lies,
And all the secret partes iscorcht, with deadly fier fries.
The bloud all clotterd in their Cheekes, in cluster lies by lumps,
And it and heate together makes, great, straung, and ruddy bumps.
And bloud and flesh congeled stands, in Face as stiffe as stake.
And Eyes in head fast fixed set, and often trickling make.
And downe apace whole fluds they steame, and clots and drops doe trill,
And all the skin from of their Face, by flakes and scales doth pill.
A thousand fearefull sounds at once, into their eares doe rush.
And lothsome bloud out of their Nose, by stilling streames doth gush.
The very anguish of their heart doth cause them for to shake.
And what with payne and heate, and feare, their woried lims doe quake.
Then some the running Ryvers haunt, and some on ground doe wallow,
And some agayne their thirst to slake, cold water gulping swallow.
Thus all our country tost with plague in Griefe it waltering lies.
And still desiring for to dye, a thousand deathes it dyes.
But God to heare them then is prest : and death to none denyes.
Besydes al this, the church some do frequent : but not to pray,
But onely for to glut the Gods, with that that they do say.
But who is this that comes to Court in hast with poasting pace?
What? ist Creon that noble Prince (for deedes and stately race?)
Or doth my mynd opprest with care thinges false for true contrive?
Creon it is long looked for, his sight doth me revyve.

THE SECONDE ACTE

THE FIRST SCENE

ŒDIPUS, CREON

FOR feare my body chilles, alas, and trembling all I stand
In quakinge dread. I seke and toyle, these mischiefes to withstand.
But al in vayne I spend my thoughtes it wil not be, I see,
As long as all my sences thus by cares distracted bee.
My mynd desyrous stil (Oh God,) the truth for to unfold,
With doubtful Dread is daunted so, that it can scant upholde
It selfe. O Brother deare, if way or meane of health thou know,
Declare it out and sticke not all the truth to me to show.
CRE. The Oracle (most noble king) ys darke, and hidden lies.
ŒD. Who doubtful health to sicke men brings, all health to them denies.
CRE. Apolloes use yt is the troth in darkesome dens to hold.
ŒD. And Œdipus of Gods it hath thinges hidden to unfold :
Speake out, tell all, and spare not man : all doubtes I can discus.
CRE. Apollo then (most noble King) himselfe commaundeth thus.
By exile purge the Princes seat, and plague with vengeance due
That haples wretch, whose bloudy handes of late King Laius slue :
Before that this perfourmed bee, no hope of milder ayer :
Wherfore do this (O King) or else All hope of helpe dispayre.
ŒD. Durst any man on earth attempte, that noble Prince to slaye ?
Shew me the man that I may him dispatch out of the way.
CRE. God graunt I may it safely tel : the hearyng was to terrible,
My senses all amased are : it is a thing so horrible,

That I abhorre to utter it (oh God) for feare I quake
And even at the very thought my lims beginne to shake.
Assoone as I Appollos Church, had entred in affrayd,
Uppon my face flat downe I fell, and thus to him I prayd.
Oh God if ever thou didst rue, on wretched misers state,
If ever men opprest thou easd, or didst their cares abate,
If ever thou in present neede didst present helpe declare,
If ever thou afflicted Hartes with cares consumd didst spare :
Shew now thy wonted clemency and pitty knowne of yore.
Scant had I sayd : Resounding all the mountaynes thondring rore :
And filthy feendes spout out their flames out of their darksome caves.
And woods do quake, and hilles do move, and up the surging waves
Do mount unto the skies aloft, and I amased stand,
Still looking for an aunsweare at Apollos sacred hand.
When out with ruffled hayre disguisd the Prophet comes at last :
And when that shee had felt the heate of mighty Phœbus blast,
All puffyng out she swelles in rage, and pattring still she raves,
And scant she entred had into Apollos shyning caves,
When out a thundring voyce doth brust that 's farre above mans reach.
So dreadful seemed then to me the mighty Phœbus speach.
Than thus he spake and thus at length into myne eares he rusht
Whyle sprawling stil the Prophet lay before the doores in dust.
The Thebane City never shal be free from plagues (quoth he,)
Except from thense the Kingkiller forthwith expulsed bee :
Unto Apollo knowen he was, or ever he was borne
Do this : or else no hope of health, to this the gods have sworn.
And as for thee, thou shalt not long in quiet state indure,
But with thy self wage war thou shalt and war thou shalt procure
Unto thy children deare : and crepe agayn thou shalt into thy mothers wombe.
Œd. Loke what the Gods commaunded have accomplished shalbe.
Nor never shal these eyes of myne abyde the day to see,
A King of kingdome spoyld by force, by guyle or craft supprest.
A kinge to kinges the prop ought be, and chiefest cause of rest :

THE FIFTH TRAGEDY

No man regardes his death at all whom living he doth feare.
Cr. Great cause makes mee my Princes death conceale and closly beare.
Œd. Ought any cause of feare or griefe, thy duty for to let ?
Cre. The threatning of the prophesyes, do stil my breast beset.
Œd. Let us (sith God commaunds) forthwith some good attonement make
If any way, or meanes there be their wrathful rage to slake.
Thou God that sits on seate on high, and al the world dost guide,
And thou by whose commaundement the Starres in Skies do glide :
Thou, thou that onely ruler art of Seas, of Floods, and all,
On thee and on thy Godhead great, for these requestes I call.
Who so hath slayne king Laius, oh Jove I do thee pray,
Let thousand ils upon him fall, before his dying day.
Let him no health ne comfort have, but al to crusht with cares,
Consume his wretched yeares in griefe, and though that death him spares
Awhyle. Yet mischiefes all, at length uppon him light.
With all the evils under Sun, that ugly monster smight.
In exile let him live a Slave, the rated course of life.
In shame, in care, in penury, in daunger and in strife.
Let no man on him pity take, let all men him revyle.
Let him his Mothers sacred Bed incestuously defyle.
Let him his father kill. And yet let him do mischiefes more.
What thing more haynous can I wish then that I wisht before ?
Let him do all those illes I say, that I have shund and past.
All those and more (if more may be) oh God upon him cast.
Let him no hope of pardon have : but sue and all in vayne.
All hellish Furies on him light, for to encrease his payne.
O Jove powre downe thy fury greate, thy thundring thumpes out throw
Let Boreas boysterous blastes and stormy plagues upon him blow.
Consume him quight. Fret out his guttes with pockes and botches vile
Let all diseases on him light that wretched bodyes fyle.
Let these and more (if more may be) uppon that Monster fall.
Let Harpies pawes and greedy paunche devoure his members all.

Let no man him regard : or seeke his limmes in grave to lay :
But let him dye ten thousand deathes before his dying day.
By this my Kingdome I do sweare, and Kingdome that I left,
By al my Countrey Gods that bene in Temples closely kept,
I sweare, I vow, I do protest, and thereto witnes take :
The Starres, the Seas, the Earth and all that ere thy hand did make.
Except that I my selfe forthwith this bloudy monster find,
To wreake the wrath of God some way with solempne oth I bynde.
And so my father, Polybius his happy dayes outlyve.
And so my mother Merope, no mariage new contrive :
As he shall dye that did this deede, and none shal him excuse.
Whoso he be here I protest for that he shortly rues :
But where this wicked deede was don Creon now tell me playne :
Both by what meanes ? and where : and how King Laius was slayne.
Creon. Passing through Castalia woods and mountayns heapt with snoe
Where groves and scrubs, and bushes thicke and brambles sharp do groe,
A threepathd crooked way there is that diversly doth goe.
One unto Bacchus citty bends that Phoce doth hight,
The other to Olenius, forth stretcheth out aright :
The third that reacheth through the vales and by the rivers lyes
Tends downe unto the Bancks wherby Eleia water plyes.
There unawares (O piteous chaunce) a troup of theves entraps
The noble prince, and murders him, hence spring these great mishaps
Which heape you realms with hideous woes and plagues on every side,
By just decree of heavenly powers which can no murder bide.
But see Tiresias where he coms with old and trembling pace.
I thincke Apolloes heavenly might have brought him to this place.
See where he comes : and Manto too, his steps directing stayes
Tis he who for your grace (O king) and for your countrie prayes.

THE FIFTH TRAGEDY

THE SECOND SCENE

ŒDIPUS, TYRESIAS, MANTO

Come holy priest (to Phœbus next) these doubtfull aunswers lose :
And whom that destines will to dye, straightwayes to me disclose.
Ty. Renowmed Prince, though still I stand in silence dumme dismayde :
And though by inwarde feare of mynde my lingring tonge is stayde :
Yet pardon me (O noble Prince,) and geve me leave a while.
From lack of sight springs Ignoraunce which powre hath to exile
Unspotted Truth from doubtfull breasts. This thing ful well you knoe,
But whither God and Countrey calles, with willing minde I goe.
Let deadly fatall destenies, be boulted out at length.
O King if I of greener yeares had now my wonted strength :
This matter soone discust should be, and I would take in hande,
My selfe in presence of the Gods, in temple for to stande.
A mighty Oxe all coulourd white, up on the Aulters reare,
Which never yet on weried necke, the croked yoake did beare.
And Manto thou, O daughter mine, mine onely prop and stay :
The secret hidden misteries, and sacred signes out say.
Ma. The beast before the Aulter stands. Ty. To Gods a prayer make,
And on the holy Aulters eke, some pleasaunt odors shake.
Ma. Tis done. And all the fiers fierce, with incence bright doe flame.
Ty. O Manto now what signes seest thou ? how doe thy matters frame ?
What ? doth the fire the Sacrifice encompas rounde about ?
Ma. Not so. But first it mounts aloft, and streight it flasheth out.
Ty. Well Yet, how doth the sacred flame all shining bright and cleare
It selfe on high unto the Skies, with sparkeling flakes upreare ?
Or doeth it oft rebounding backe, it selfe from Skyes unfould ?
Or all with rumbling roring noyse, about the place ist rould ?

Or dim'd with smoke, ist tost from place to place, now heere, now theare ?

Ma. Not one. But diverse colours mixt the flame doth with it beare,
Much like unto the Rainbow, which with sundry paynted hues
Foreshewes unto the husbandmen the weather that ensues.
What colour it wants, or what it hath, to me is like uncertayne.
Now is it black, now blue, now red, and even now agayne
Quight out it is. Yet once agayn, all fierce it flashing flames :
But lo, yet mischiefs more then this, unluckely it frames.
The fier quight a sunder parts, and flame with flame doth fight.
O father I abhorre to see this ugly lothsome sight.
The Wyne to blud is turned quight, and all the Prynces hed
With thicke black clouds encompast is, with smoke all overspred.
O father tell what this portends ? Ty. What should I tell alas ?
My mynde for feare astonied stands, and trembling cold doth pas
Through all my lims. What shall I say ? or where shall I begin ?
O cruell Plagues, O wrekfull Gods, O vengeaunce due for sin.
Some dyre and blouddy deed (Alas) these hydeous signes declare.
Whats that the Gods would have revealde, and yet doe bid beware
To utter it ? By certaine signes their wrath is oft descride :
Such signes appeere, and yet they seeme their fury great to hide.
They are ashamde : I wot nere what. Come hither, quickly bring
Some salt with thee, and it upon the sacrifice goe fling.
What ? are their lookes pleasant and milde, and doe they gently bide
The touching of thy sacred hands ? Ma. What may this thing betide ?
The Bull (a wonder great to see) his head on hie he lifts
And turned still unto the East, from thence it alway shifts,
Still lothing as hee seemes to me, of heaven to see the light,
Oft scouling with his blearing eyes with gastely ruthfull sight.
Ty. But doth one blow them drive to ground, or more then one they have ?
Ma. The Heifer as it seemde, enflamd with courage stoute and brave
Upon the mortall Blade did rush, and there hirselfe destries :
When out the bloud it foming spoutes, and mounts unto the Skies.

The brawny Bull twise stroke or thrise, with groveling groning tyres,
And toyling up and down he moyles. And still to live desires.
And yet at length with much ado, his brutish breath expiers.
Ty. What ? doth the wounde wide open gape, or is it closed up ?
Or doth the deepnes of the hole, the bloud in soking sup ?
Ma. Out of the wounded Heifers breast Black bluish waters rush.
As for the Bull, but litle bloud out of his wounds doth gush.
It back rebounds, and from his Mouth and Eyes by streames doth flow.
But what these dreadfull signes portend the Gods aloone doe know.
Ty. By this unhappy Sacrifice, great feares within mee rise.
But tell mee now : In the inner parts, what secret hidden lies ?
Ma. O Father what meanes this (alas) that more then wonted guise
The Inwards stir ? and shake my hands, and heaving oft arise,
The bloud by streames out of the vaynes, full straungly skips aloft.
The heart all schorcht and hidden lies, and strykes are seene full oft,
Of Colour very wan and pale : The chiefest parts doe want.
The Lyver blackish gall out spurts, and somwhat rysing pants.
And that, that myschiefes great, to kingdoms doth foreshow :
Two heads are seene, and yet both heads one skin doth overgrow
And overheales them quight. But yet the skin, it is so thin
That easely one may discerne what lieth hid therein.
And that which horror doth encrease, a man may plainly see
How both the heart, the Lights, and Lungs, and all disturbed bee.
The fearefull noyse and sound you heere is not of beasts, but fier
That roaring on the Alters makes, presaging wrekefull yre
Of angry Gods who doe foretell some purpose that they have,
For to revenge some foule misdeede that vengeance just doth crave.
No part his proper place observes, nor keepes his order due :
But altogether quight disguisde, with an unwonted hue.
Mishapen, out of frame, transformde, displaced quight (alas)
What thing is that the Gods entend ere long to bring to pas ?
Œd. Why then declare from whence, and why these deadly signes arise,
With courage stout I will it heare, it shall not once aggrise
My valiaunt mynd. Extremest ils have power to banish feare.
Ty. You will wishe that unhard which you so much desyre to heare.

ŒD. Yet sence the Gods wil have him known tell me (I say) his name
That slue your King. TY. Nor wing, nor womb of Bird or beast the same
Can tell (O king) new sacrifice, new meanes we must invent.
From dredfull darke infernall damps some Fury must be sent
These mischiefes great for to unfolde. Or els King Ditis hee,
That Empyre keepes on griesly Ghosts, entreated needes must bee
These things forthwith for to disclose. Tell who shall have the charge,
A King thou art, than maist not thou go through those kingdoms large.
ŒD. Than noble Creon thou shalt goe, this payne is first for thee :
Who must this crown and kingdome great enjoy after mee.

THE THIRDE ACTE

THE FIRSTE SCENE

ŒDIPUS, CREON

HOUGH that thy Face where sadnes sits in heavy mourning guise,
Nought els portend, but dedly griefes, and mischiefes stil to ryse :
Yet tel some meanes wherby at length the Gods we may appease,
And purchase to our Kingdomes wast, some hope of health and ease.

CRE. Alas you byd me that disclose which feare doth byd me hyde.
ŒD. If that the Thebane Citties great, by doleful plagues destryde,
Perce not thy hart : yet oughtest thou, these Kingdomes for to rue,
Which were unto thy brothers house, of auncient title due.
CRE. You wish the thing to know, which you wil wish unknown at length.
ŒD. Why so ? a simple remedy of litle force and strength
Is ignoraunce of our estate when daungers us betyde.
But what ? wilt thou so great a good for common safety hide ?
CRE. Irkesome Medcines and perilous in sicknes I abhorre.
ŒD. And I likewyse at Subjects hands disdayne to take a dorre,
Speake out with speed, or else by proofe of torment thou shalt find
How daungerous a case it is to gawle a Princes mynd.
CRE. Kinges often use to wish untolde, which they had tel before.
ŒD. Go to, dispatch and cease in time to vexe me any more.
Except that thou forthwith to me this heinous deede disclose :
The gods I do protest, to death for al thou onely goes.
CRE. O pardon me most noble king. O let me hold my pes,
Of al the gracis Princes graunt, what favour may be lesse ?

Œd. As though the silence hurts not more both king and countries weale :
Then spech oft tymes : which subjects thoughts to Princes doth reveale ?
Dispatch at once, stir me no more, thou knowst my guise of olde.
Cre. Silence denied, what priviledge may silly Subject holde ?
Œd. A traytor he is, who silence keepes, when king commaunds to speake.
Cre. Then pardon my constrayned speach, sith silence for to breake
You me compell. A dolefull tale (O king) my tongue must tell,
And which I feare your majesty will not interpret well.
Œd. Was ever man rebukt for that, that he was bid to say ?
Cre. Well than since needes I must : I am contented to obay.
A wood there is from City farre, enhaunst with stately trees :
Where many a plant and herbe doth grow, which Phœbus never sees :
With everduring bushes greene, the Cypresse there doth ryse,
And puts his olde and loffty head within the cloudy Skyes.
The auncient Time-eaten Oke with crooked bended lims,
The Teyl tree fine : The Alder which in Neptunes kingdoms swims,
The Bayes with bitter beries eke the Elmes deere friends to Vynes,
And many a noble tree besides, as Mirtels, Firres, and Pynes.
Amidst them all, one tree there is with large out stretched armes,
Whose roring sound, and craking noyse the lesser woods Icharmes,
And overshades them all : a Tree of monstrous huge estate,
Beset with fearefull woods : there is that dyre and dreadfull gate
That leades to lothsome Lymbo Lake, and pyts that ever flowe.
Where choked miry mud doth streame with slimy course full slowe.
Here when the priest was entred in, with comely aged pace,
He stayed not : No neede there was, for night was still in place.
Than all the ground wyde open gapes, and smouthering vapours ryse,
And fyre and smoke, and styfling stink, mounts up unto the Skyes.
The Priest with wayling weede iclad, his fatall rod out tooke :
And entring in, in blacke Aray, full often times it shooke.
With heavy cheere and dolful pace : his hoary haire was twynde
With bowes of mortall Ewe. A tree wherewith the mourners winde

Theyr mourning heads, and Garlands make. In this guise all arayde,
The sacred Priest doth enter in, with trembling lims dismayde :
Than in the Sheepe, and Oxen blacke, by backwarde course are drown.
And odoures sweete, and Frankencence, on flaming fyres are thrown.
The beasts on burning Altars cast, do quake with schorched lims :
And bloudy streames with fyre mixt, about the Aultars swims.
Than on the darke infernall Gods, and him that rules them all :
With deadly shriking voyce aloude, the Prophet gins to call.
And rouls the Magick verse in mouth, and hidden Artes doth prove :
Which eyther power have to appease or els the Gods to move.
Than bloudy streaming Lycours black, with broyling heate doe boyle :
And all the Beasts consume and burn. The Prophet than to toyle
Begins. And mixed wyne and Mylke upon the Aultars throwes.
And all the Dongeon darke, and wyde with streaming bloud it flowes.
Than out with thundring voyce agayne the Prophet calles and cryes,
And straight as much with mumbling mouth he champs in secret wyse.
The trees do turne. The Rivers stand. The ground with roring shakes.
And all the world as seemes to mee, with fearefull trembling quakes.
I am heard, I am heard, than out aloude the Priest began to cry :
Whan all the dampned soules by heapes abrode outrushing fly.
Then woods with rumbling noyse, doe oft resounding make.
And Heaven, and Earth together goe. And bowes and trees do crake.
And Thunders roore. And Lightnings flash. And waves aloft doe fly.
And ground retyres : and Dogs doe bawl : and Beastes are heard to cry.
And whyther long of Acheron, that lothsom Flud that flowes
All stinking streames : or of the earth, that out her Bowels throwes,

Free place to Sprights to geve : or of that fierce infernall Hound,
That at such times doth bustling make with chayns, and ratling sound.
The Earth al wide it open gapes. And I did see on ground,
The Gods with colour pale and wan, that those dark kingdoms keepe.
And very night I saw in deede, and thousand shapes to creepe,
From out those filthy stinking Lakes, and lothsom pits of Hell.
Where all the evils under Son, in darksom shades doe dwell.
So quaking all for feare I stoode with minde right sore apalde,
Whilst on those Gods with trembling mouth the Priest full often calde.
Who all at once, out of theyr dens did skip with griesly Face.
And Monsters grim, and stinging Snakes seemd wander in that place.
And all the fowlest Feendes of Hell, and Furies all were theare.
And all transformed Ghosts and sprights, that ever Hell did beare.
With Cares, and all Diseases vyle, that mortall mynds doe crush,
All those, and more I sawe out of those Dongeons deepe to rush.
And Age I sawe, with riveled Face, and Neede, and Feare, and Death,
And Fyre, and flames, and thousand ills out from those Pits to breath.
Then I was gon : and quight amazd The wenche in worser case.
And yet of olde, acquaynted with her Fathers Artes she was.
The Priest himselfe unmooved stoode, and boldly cited owt :
Whole Armies of king Ditis men, who clustring in a Rowt :
All flittring thin like Cloudes, disperst abrode in Ayre doe fly.
And bearing sundry shapes and formes doe scud about in Sky,
A thousand woods I thinke have not so many leaves on trees.
Ten thousand medowes fresh have not so many flowers for bees.
Ten hundred thousand rivers not so many Foule can show :
Nor all the drops and streams, and gulphes that in the Seas do flow,
If that they might be wayed, can sure so great a number make
As could those shapes and formes that flew from out of Limbo lake:
Both Tantalus and Zetus too, and pale Amphions Ghost :
And Agave, and after her ten thousand Sprightes do post.

Than Pentheus, and more and more, in like estate ensue :
Til out at length comes Laius with foule and grisly hue :
Uncomly drest in wretched plight with fylth all overgrowne :
All perst with wounds, (I loth to speake) with bloud quight overflown.
A Miser ryght as seemd to me, and most of Misers all :
Thus in this case, at length he spake, and thus began to call.
O Cadmus cruel Citty vyle, that stil delightste in bloud,
O Cadmus thou, which kinsmens death, accountst as chiefest good.
Teare out the blooudy Bowels of your Children, learne of me,
Do that, and rather more, then you would byde the day to see
Like ills as late on mee are light. Loe mothers love (alas)
Hath causd the greatest misery that ere in Theba was.
The Countrey with the wrath of Gods at this tyme is not tost,
Nor yearth nor ayre infect is not the cause that all bene lost.
No No. A bloudy King is cause of all these mischiefes great :
A bloudy wretch : A wretched child that sits in Fathers Seate :
And Mothers bed defyles (O wretch) and entreth in agayne,
In places whence he came from once and doubleth so her payne,
Whilst that hee fils the haples wombe wherin himselfe did lie
With graceles seede and causeth her twise childbirthes pangues to try :
Unhappy Sonne, but Father worse and most unhappy hee,
By whom the lawes of sacred shame so sore confounded bee.
For that that very bestes (almost) do all abhorre to do,
Even of his mothers body he hath brothers gotten two.
O mischiefe great : O dredful deede, then Sphinx, O monster more :
Example unto ages all of Gods foretold before.
But I thee, thee, that Scepter holdst, thy Father wil pursue,
And wreacke my selfe on thee and thyne with plagues and vengeance due.
All restles rage of spite and paine I will uppon thee blow,
And all the furies foule of hell uppon thee I will throw.
I wil subvert thy Houses cleane, for this thy lothsome lust :
I wil do this thou wretch : And thee, and thyne consume to dust.

Wherfore dispatch at once (I say) into exile drive your King.
That ground that first of all he leaves, with fresh grene grasse shall spring,
And sweete, and pleasaunt Ayre, and healthfull blasts shall ryse,
And all the evills under Sun, that mortall men surprise :
The Pocks, the Piles, the Botch, the blaine, and death with him shall fly,
And with him mischiefs all shall passe, and Monsters under Sky.
And as for him I know hee would depart with willing mynde :
But I will clog his Feete, and hands, his way he shall not finde.
But groping with his aged staffe, shall passe from place to place.
This shall he doe. And none shall rue upon his ruthfull case.
Rid you the Monster from the Earth, for Heaven let mee alone.
No sooner sayd, but straight away, his dreadfull Ghost was gone,
And fast by thousands after him, th' other Sprights in hyde :
Than Cold and trembling feare began through all my bones to glyde.
Œd. The thing I alwayes fearde, I see upon mee now is layde :
But slender props they are (God wot) whereby your Treason is stayde.
Meropa my Mother deare, shall mee from this defend :
Polybius eke shall purge mee quight, from Actions all, that tend
To murder, or to incest vile, they both shall mee excuse.
In such a case no meanes at all of tryall I refuse.
Lay what you can unto my charge. No fault in mee remayns.
The Thebanes long or I came heere, of Laius death complayns.
My Mother yet alyve, my Father still in like estate.
No, no, this is some doltishe drift, of yon false Prophets pate.
Or else some mighty God above, doth beare me no good will,
And seekes by Plagues on mee to wreke his wrathfull vengeaunce stil.
Ah Sir I am glad at length I smell your drifts and fetches fyne.
I know the whole confederacy, your sleights I can untwyne.
That beastly Priest, that bleareyed wretch beelyes the Gods and mee :
And thee thou Traytour in my place hath promist king to bee.
Cre. Alas would I my Sister of her lawfull kingdome spoyle ?
Thinke you such treason may have place in brothers breast to boyle ?

Yf that myne Oth could me not keepe content with my degree :
But that contemning meane estate, I would clime aloft to bee.
Yet should ill Fortune mee deter, from such attempts I trowe :
Whose guise it is on Princes heads, huge heapes of Cares to throwe.
I would advise your grace betimes this charge from you to cast :
Least lingring long all unawares, you be opprest at last.
Assure your selfe, in baser state, more safer you may live :
And shun a thousand Cares, and Griefs : which Princes hearts doe rive.

Œd. And dost thou me exhort thou slave my kingdome for to leave ?
O faythlesse head, O shamelesse heart, that could such treasons weave ?
Darst thou attempt thou villayne vile this thing, to me to breake ?
And fearst thou not in such a cause so boldly for to speake.

Cre. I would perswade them so (O King) who freely might possesse
Their Realmes such piteous cares I see, do Prynces hearts oppresse :
But as for you of force you must your Fortunes chainge abyde.

Œd The surest way for them that gape for kingdoms large and wyde,
Is first things meane, and rest, and peace, and base estate to prayse :
And yet with Tooth and Nayle, to toyle to mount aloft alwayes.
So often times, most restlesse beastes doe chiefly rest commend.

Cre. Shall not my service long suffice my truth for to defend ?

Œd. Time is the onely meanes for such as thou to worke theyr will.

Cre. It is so syr, but as for mee, of goods I have my fill.
A great resort. A pleasaunt life : from Princely cares exempt.
All these might (surely) mee disswade from such a foule attempt.
There is no day almost (O King) the whole yeare thorow out,
Where in some royall gyfts are not from countreys round about
Unto mee sent, both Golde, and pearles, and things of greater cost,
Which I let passe, least I should seeme but vainly for to bost.
Besides the life of many a man hath bin preservde by mee.
In such a blisfull state (O King) what can there wanting bee ?

(Œd. Good Fortune can no meane observe, but stil she preaseth higher.)

Cre. Shall I than guilelesse die (alas,) my cause and all untryde ?

Œd. Were unto you at any time my life, my deedes discride ?

Did any man defend mee yet ? or els my causes pleade ?
And guiltlesse yet I am condemn'de to this you doe mee leade,
And mee expresse example give, which I entend to take.
What measure you doe meat to mee, lyke measure must I make
CRE. The minde which causelesse dred appawls, true cause of feare bewraies
That conscience is not guiltles sure, which every blast dismaies.
ŒD. Hee that in midst of perilles deepe, and daungers hath bene cast,
Doth seeke all meanes to shun like ills as hee hath overpast.
CRE. So hatreds ryse. ŒD. Hee that to much doth use ill will to feare,
Unskilfull is : and knowes not how, hee ought him selfe to beare
In kings estate. For feare alone doth Kingdomes chiefly keepe.
Than hee that thus doth arme himselfe from feare all free may sleepe.
CRE. Who so the cruell tyrant playes, and guiltlesse men doth smight,
Hee dreadeth them that him doe dread, so feare doth chiefly light
On causers chiefe. A just revenge for bloudy mindes at last.
ŒD. Come take this traytor vile away, In dongeon deepe him fast
Enclose. There for his due deserts, let him abide such payne
And scourge of minde (as meete it is) false traytors to sustayne.

CHORUS

See, see, the myserable State of Prynces carefull lyfe.
What raging storms ? what bloudy broyles ? what toyle ? what endlesse stryfe
Doe they endure ? (O God) what plagues ? what griefe do they sustayne ?
A Princely lyfe : No. No. (No doubt) an ever duringe payne.
A state ene fit for men on whom Fortune woulde wreke her will.
A place for Cares to couch them in. A doore wyde open still
For griefes and daungers all that ben to enter when they list.
A king these Mates must ever have, it bootes not to resist.
Whole fluds of privy pinching feare, great anguishe of the minde :
Apparent plagues, and dayly griefes. These playfayres Princes finde.

And other none, with whom they spend, and passe theyr wretched dayes.
Thus hee that Princes lives, and base Estate together wayes,
Shall finde the one a very hell, a perfect infelicity :
The other eke a heaven right, exempted quight from mysery.
Let Œdipus example bee of this unto you all,
A Mirrour meete, A Patern playne, of Princes carefull thrall.
Who late in perfect Joy as seem'de, and everlasting blis,
Triumphantly his life out led, a Myser now hee is,
And most of wretched Misers all, even at this present tyme,
With doubtfull waves of feare Itost, subject to such a Cryme
Whereat my tongue amased stayes, God graunt that at the last,
It fall not out as Creon tolde. Not yet the worst is past,
(I feare.)

ŒDIPUS

THE FOURTH ACTE

THE FIRSTE SCENE

ŒDIPUS, JOCASTA

MY mynde with doubtfull waves of dread, is tossed
to and fro,
I wot not what to say (Alas) I am tormented so.
For all the Gods on me doe cry, for paynes and
vengeaunce due.
They say that these my guiltlesse hands, king
Laius lately slue.
But this my conscience voyde of crime and
mynde from mischiefe free :
To Gods untried, to mee well known denies it so to bee :
Full well I doe remember once, by chaunce I did dispatch
A man who sought by force with mee presumptuously to match.
His purpose was (a fond attempt) my Chariot for to stay,
This I remember well enough, the strife was in the way.
And he a man well steept in yeares, and I a lusty bloud,
And yet of meere disdayne and pride in vayne hee mee withstood.
But this from Thebes farre was done, a croked three pathd way,
That was the place in which we fought : it hard by Phocis lay.
Deare Wyfe resolve my doubts at once, and mee expresly tell,
How old was Laius the King whan this mischaunce befell ?
Was he of fresh and lusty yeares ? or stricken well in age
When he was kilde ? O ease my thoughts of this tormenting rage.
Joc. Betwixt an old man an a yong : but nearer to an olde.
ŒD. Were there great Bands of men with him his Person to
upholde ?
Joc. Some by the way deceived were, and some deterd by payne :
A fewe by toyle and labour long, did with their Prince remayne.

Œd. Were any slayne in his defence ? Joc. Of one report is rife,
Who constant in his princes cause full stoutly lost his lyfe.
Œd. It is enough, I knowe the man that hath this mischiefe done.
The number and the place agrees. The time untried alone
Remaynes : Than tell what time hee died, and when that he was slaine.
Joc. Tis ten yeares since : you now revive my chiefest cares againe.

THE SECOND SCENE

SENEX, ŒDIPUS

The Corinth people all (O King) in Fathers place to rayn
Doe call your Grace : Polybius doth eternall rest obtayn.
Œd. O God what Fortune vyle doth mee oppresse on every side ?
How doe my sorrowes still encrease ? Tell how my Father dide.
Sen. No sicknesse (sir) but very age did of his life him reave.
Œd. And is hee dead ? in deede ? not slayne ? what joy may I conceave ?
How may I now triumph ? the Gods to witnesse I doe call,
To whom are known my hidden thoughts and secret workings al :
Now may I lift to skyes my hands, my hands from mischiefe free.
But yet the chiefest cause of feare remayneth still to mee.
Sen. Your Fathers kingdom ought al dred out of your mind to drive.
Œd. That I confesse. But secret thoughts my trembling heart do rive
With inward doubt of deepe distresse, my Mother I do feare.
This grudge is that continually my heart doth rent and teare.
Sen. Do you your Mother feare ? on your return that onely stayes.
Œd. I feare not her : but from her sight, a godly zeale mee frayes.
Sen. What will you her a Wydow leave ? Œd. Now, now, thou woundst my heart.
This, this, and onely this (alas,) is cause of all my smart.
Sen. Tell me (O king) what doubtfull feare doth presse thy princely brest :
Kings councels I can well conceale that ben with Cares opprest.
Œd. Least as Apollo hath foretolde, I should a Mariage make
With myne owne Mother : only this fowle feare doth make me quake.

Sen. Such vayne and pevysh feares, at length from out your breast exyle.
Meropa your Mother is not in deede, you do your selfe beguile.
Œd. What vauntage should it be to her adopted Sonnes to have ?
Sen. A kingdom she shall gayne thereby. Her Husband layde in grave,
The chiefest prop to stay her Realmes from present confusion,
Is children for to have : and hope of lawfull succession.
Œd. What are the meanes whereby thou dost these secrets understand.
Sen. My selfe (your grace) an Infant gave into your fathers hand.
Œd. Didst thou me to my Father geve ? Who than gave me to thee ?
Sen. A Sheparde sir, that wonted on Cytheron Hills to bee.
Œd. What made thee in those woods to raunge ? what hadst thou there to do ?
Sen. Upon those Hils my Beasts I kept, somtime a Sheepeherde to.
Œd. What nots, what privy marks hast thou, wherby thou dost me know ?
Sen. The holes that through your feete are borde from whence your name did gro.
Œd. Declare forthwith what was his name that gave me unto thee.
Sen. The kings chief Shephard than that was, delivered you to mee.
Œd. What was his name ? Sen. O king old mens remembrance soone doth fayle :
Oblivion for the chiefest part, doth hoary heads assayle,
And drowns their former memory of things long out of mynde.
Œd. What ? canst thou know the man by sight ? Sen. Perhaps I should him finde,
And know by Face. Things overwhelmd by time, and quight opprest,
A small marke oft to mynde revokes, and fresh renues in brest.
Œd. Sirs bid the Herdmen forthwith drive theyr Beasts to Aulters all.
Away with speede, make hast, the Master Sheepherds to mee call.
Sen. Sith that your destny this doth hyde, and Fortune it detayne
And closely keepe, let it be so, from opening that refrayne
That long conceald hath hidden lyen, that seeke not to disclose :
Such things outsercht and found oftimes agaynst the sercher goes

ŒD. Can any mischiefe greater be ? than this that now I feare.
SEN. Advise you wel remembre fyrst what weight this thing doth beare :
That thus you goe about to search, and sift with Tooth and Nayle,
Observe the golden meane : beware beare still an equall sayle.
Your Countreys wealth (O King) your lyfe, and all upon this lyes.
Though you stir not, bee sure at length your Fortune you escryes.
A happy state for to disturbe doth nought at all behove.
ŒD. When things be at the worst, of them a man may safely move.
SEN. Can you have ought more excellent ? than is a Prynces state ?
Beware least of your Parents found it you repent to late.
ŒD. No (father) no I warrant that : repent not I (I trow.)
I seeke it not to that entent. I have decreed to know
The matter at the full. Wherefore I will it now pursue.
Lo Phorbas : where hee trembling coms, with comely aged hue,
To whom of all the kinges flock then, the care and charge was due.
Dost thou his name, his speach, his Face, or yet his person know ?
SEN. Me thinks I should have seene his Face, and yet I cannot show
The places where I have him seene, small time brings such a chainge,
As well acquaynted Faces oft, to us appeare full strainge.
This looke is neyther throughly known, nor yet unknown to mee.
I cannot tell : I doubt it much, and yet it may be hee.
In Laius tyme long since when hee these Kingdomes great did keepe :
Wast thou not on Citheron hils chiefe Shepard to his sheepe ?

THE THIRDE SCENE

PHORBAS, SENEX, ŒDIPUS

SOMETIME a charge of sheepe I had, unworthy though I weer,
And did upon those hills chiefe rule on other Shepards beare.
SEN. Knowst thou not me. PH. I cannot tell. ŒD. Didst thou once give this man
A Childe. Speake out, why dost thou stay ? if so, declare it than.
Why dost thou blush and doubting stand, troth seeketh no delay ?
PH. Things out of minde you call agayne, almost quight worne away.

Œd. Confesse thou slave, or els I sweare, thou shal constrayned bee.
Ph. In deede I doe remembre once, an Infant yong by mee
Delyvered was unto this Man : but well I wot in vayne,
I know he could not long endure, nor yet alyve remayne.
Long since he is dead (I know it well) hee lives not at this day.
Sen. No ? God forbid, he lives no doubt, and long may live I pray.
Œd. Why dost thou say the child is dead, that thou this man didst give ?
Ph. With Irons sharp his feete were board, I know he could not live,
For of the sore a swelling rose, I saw the bloud to gush
From out of both the wounds : and down by powring streames to flush.
Sen. Now stay (O king) no farther now, you know almost the troth.
Œd. Whose child was it ? tell me forthwith. Ph. I dare not for mine Othe.
Œd. Thine Oth thou slave ? Some fyre here. Ile charme thine Othe and thee,
With fyre and flames : except forthwith thou tell the troth to mee.
Ph. O pardon me, though rude I seeme, I seeke not to withstand
Your graces minde : (most noble king.) My life is in your hand.
Œd. Tell me the troth, what child, and whose, What was his Mothers name ?
Ph. Born of your wyfe. Œd. O gaping earth devour my body quight :
Or else thou God that ruler art of houses voyde of light,
To Hell my Soule with thunder boltes to Hell my Soule down dryve,
Where griesly Ghosts in darknesse weepe, and endlesse payne do lyve.
For thee alone, these Plagues doe rage. For thee these mischiefes ryse.
For thee the Earth lyes desolate. For thee thou wretch the Skies
Infected are. For thee, for thee, and for thy filthy lust,
A hundred thousand guiltlesse men, consumed are to dust.
O people throw : cast heapes of stones upon this hatefull Hed :
Bath all your swords within my brest : you furies overshed
My restlesse thoughts with raging woes : and plungde in seas of pain,
Let mee those horrors still endure, which damned soules sustain.

THE FIFTH TRAGEDY

You citizens of Stately Thebes vex me with torments due.
Let Father, Son, and Wyfe, and all with vengeance me pursue.
Let those that for my sake alone with plagues tormented bee
Throw darts, cast stones, fling fier and flames, and tortures all on mee.
O shame : O slaunder of the World : O hate of Gods above :
Confounder O of Nature thou to lawes of sacred love,
Even from thy birth an open Foe. Thou didst deserve to dye
As soone as thou wast born. Go, go, unto the Court thee hye,
There with thy Mother (slave) triumph rejoyce as thou maist do,
Who hast thy house encreased with unhappy children so.
Make haste with speede, away, some thing thy mischiefs worthy finde,
And on thy selfe wrecke all the spight of thy revenging minde.

CHORUS

Fortune the guide of humaine lyfe doth al things chaunge at will.
And stirring stil, with restles thoughts our wretched minds doth fill.
In vayn men strive their stars to kepe when hideous tempests rise :
And blustring windes of daungers deepe sets death before their eyes.
Who saith he doth her fauning feele? and chaungeth not his minde,
When fickle fight of Fortunes wheele doth turne by course of kinde.
These grevous plagues from privat house to princely Thrones do flow,
And oft their minds with cares they souse and thick upon them strow.
Whole heapes of griefe and dyre debate, a wofull thing to see :
A princely lyfe to mysers state, converted for to bee.
O Œdipus thy fatall fall, thy dreadfull mischiefs ryght,
Thy dolfull state, thy mysery, thy thrise unhappy plight :
These things shall blase through all the world : what heart may then rejoyce
At thy distresse? I can no more : my teares doe stop my voyce.
But what is he that yonder stamps? and raging puffs and blowes,
And often shakes his vexed head, some mischiefe great hee knowes.
Good sir your countnaunce doth import some great and fearefull thing,
Tell us therefore (if that you may) what newes from Court you bring.

THE FIFTE ACTE

NUNTIUS

HEN Œdipus accursed wretch, his fatall fals had spied,
To hell he damnd his wretched soule and on the Gods he cryed
For vengeaunce due. And posting fast with franticke moode and griesly hue,
Unto his dolefull Court hee went, his thoughts for to pursue.
Much like a Lion ramping wylde, his furious head that shakes,
And roares with thundring mouth alowd, and often gnashing makes,
None otherwise this miser farde. A lothsome sight to see.
Besides himselfe for very rage, he still desires to dye.
And rowling round his wretched Eyes with vysage pale and wan :
Ten thousand Curses out he powres. Himselfe the unhappiest man
Of all that live, he doth account : as justly he may doe.
A wretch, a slave, a caitife vyle. The cause of all our woe.
And in this case enflamd with spight he cries, he stamps, he raves,
And boyling in his secret thoughts, he still desyres to have
All torments under sun that may his Cares conceivde encrease.
O wretched wyght, what should hee doe ? What man may him release ?
Thus foming all for rage at mouth, with sighes, and sobs, and grones,
His damned head ten thousand times, as oft his weryed bones
He beats. And often puffing makes, and roares, and swels, and sweats,
And on the Gods for death hee calles, for Death hee still entreats.
Three times he did begin to speake : and thryse his tong did stay,
At length he cried out alowd : O wretch. Away, away.

Away thou monstrous Beast (he sayd :) wilt thou prolong thy lyfe ?
Nay rather some man strike this breast with strooke of bloudy knyfe.
Or all you Gods above on mee your flaming fiers outcast :
And dints of Thunderbolts down throw. This is my prayer last.
What greedy vile devouring Gripe, upon my guts will gnaw ?
That Tigre fierce my hatefull limmes will quight a sunder draw ?
Loe, here I am you Gods : Loe, heere, wreke now on me your will :
Now, now you fyry Feendes of Hell, of vengeaunce take your fill.
Send out some wilde outragious beast, send Dogs mee to devoure,
Or els all ils you can devise, at once upon me powre.
O wofull soule. O sinfull wretch. Why dost thou feare to dye ?
Death only rids from woes thou knowst. Than stoutly Death defie.
With that his bloudy fatall Blade, from out his sheath he drawes,
And lowd he rores, with thundring voice, Thou beast why dost thou pawse ?
Thy Father cursed caitife thou, thy Father thou hast slayne
And in thy Mothers bed hast left an everduring stayne.
And Brothers thou hast got : nay Sons thou liest : thy Brothers all
They are. Thus for thy monstrous lust thy Countrey down doth fall.
And thinkst thou than for all these ils enough so short a payne ?
Thynkst thou the Gods will be apeasde, if thou forthwith be slayne ?
So many mischiefes don : and ist enough one stroke to byde ?
Account'ste thou it sufficient paynes, that once thy sword should glide
Quight through thy guilty breast for all ? why than dispatch and dye.
So maist thou recompence thy Fathers death sufficiently.
Let it be so : what mends unto thy Mother wilt thou make ?
Unto thy children what ? these plagues (O wretch) how wilt thou slake ?
That thus for thee thy countrey wastes ? One push shall ende them all.
A proper fetch. A fine devise. For thee a worthy fall.
Invent thou monstrous beast forthwith : a fall even worthy for
Thy selfe invent : whom all men hate and loth, and doe abhor.
And as dame Natures lawfull course is broke (O wretch) by thee,
So let to such a mischiefe great, thy Death agreeing bee.

O that I might a thousand times, my wretched lyfe renewe,
O that I might revyve and dye by course in order dewe
Ten hundred thousand times and more : than should I vengeance take
Upon this wretched head. Than I perhaps in part should make
A meete amends in deede, for this my fowle and lothsom Sin.
Than should the proofe of payne reprove the life that I live in.
The choyse is in thy hand thou wretch, than use thine owne discretion,
And finde a meanes, whereby thou maist come to extreame confusion.
And that, that oft thou maist not doe, let it prolonged bee.
Thus, thus, maist thou procure at length an endlesse death to thee.
Serch out a death whereby thou mayst perpetuall shame obtayne :
And yet not dye. But still to live in everlasting payne.
Why stayst thou man ? Go to I say : what meane these blubbring teares ?
Why weepst thou thus ? Alas to late. Leave of thy foolysh feares.
And ist enough to weepe thinkst thou ? shall teares and wayling serve ?
No wretch it shall not be. Thou dost ten thousand deaths deserve.
Myne eyes doe dally with mee I see, and teares doe still out powre.
Shall teares suffice ? No, no, not so I shall them better scowre.
Out with thine Eyes (he sayd :) and then with fury fierce enflam'de,
Like to a bloudy raging Feend and monstrous beast untam'de,
With fiery flaming spotted Cheekes his breast he often beats,
And scratch, and teare his Face hee doth and Skin a sunder treats,
That scarse his eyes in head could stand so sore he them besets.
With furious fierce outrageous minde hee stamps and cries alowd :
And roares and ralyes, with ramping rage. Thus in this case he stood,
Perplext, and vexed sore in minde, with deadly sighs and teares.
When sodenly all franticklike himselfe from ground hee teares,
And rooteth out his wretched Eyes, and sight a sunder teares.
Then gnasheth hee his bloudy Teeth, and bites, and gnawes, and champs,
His Eyes all bathd and brude in bloud, for fury fierce he stamps.

And raging more than needes (alas,) his Eyes quight rooted out :
The very holes in vayne hee scrapes so sore the wretch doth dout :
Least sight should chaunce for to remayne he rents and mangels quight
His Face, his Nose, his Mouth, and all whereon his hands do light
Hee rygs and ryves. Thus fowly rayd (alas) in piteous plight,
At length his head aloft he lifts, and therewith geves a shright.
And when he sees that all is gone, both light, and sight, and all,
Than schriching out : he thus begins upon the Gods to call.
Now spare you Gods, now spare at length my countrey prest to fall.
I have done that you did commaund : Your wraths revenged bee.
This wretched looke, this mangled face, is fittest now for mee.
Thus speaking, down the blackish bloud by streams doth gushing flow
Into his mouth. And clottred lumps of flesh the place doth strow
Wherein hee standes.
Beware betimes, by him beware, I speake unto you all :
Learne Justice, truth, and feare of God by his unhappy fall.

CHORUS

Mans lyfe with tumbling fatal course of fortunes wheele is rowld,
To it give place, for it doth run all swiftly uncontrowld.
And Cares and teares are spent in vayn, for it cannot be stayed,
Syth hie decree of heavenly powers perforce must be obayed.
What mankind bydes or does on earth it cometh from above,
Then wayling grones powrd out in griefe do nought at all behove
Our life must have her pointed course, (alas) what shall I say :
As fates decree, so things do run, no man can make them stay.
For at our byrth to Gods is known our latter dying day.
No Prayer, no Arte, not God himselfe may fatall fates resist.
But fastned all in fixed course, unchaunged they persist.
Such ende them still ensues as they appointed were to have,
Than fly all feare of Fortunes chaung, seeke not to lyve a slave
Enthrald in bondage vyle to feare. For feare doth often bring
Destnies that dreaded ben and mischiefs feard upon us fling.

Yea many a man hath come unto his fatall ende by feare.
Wherefore set pevish feare aside, and worthy courage beare.
And thou that subject art to death. Regard thy latter day,
Thinke no man blest before his ende. Advise thee well and stay.
Be sure his lyfe, and death, and all, be quight exempt from mysery
Ere thou do once presume to say : this man is blest and happy.
But thou alas, see where he coms : a wretch withouten Guide,
Bereft of sight. Halfe spoyld of lyfe : without all Pomp, and Pride
(That unto Kings Estate belongs.)

THE SECOND SCENE

ŒDIPUS, CHORUS, JOCASTA

Well, well, tis done : more yet ? No, no, no mischiefs more remaynes.
My Fathers Rytes performed are. What God on Mysers paynes
That rues within this Cloud hath rolde, and wrapt my wretched Pate.
Ah sir : this is a life alone. This is a happy State.
This is a case ene fit for thee, for thee thou wretch, for thee.
From whose accursed sight the Sun, the Stars and all doe flee.
Yet mischiefs more, who gives to doe ? The dreadfull day I have
Escapt. Thou filthy Paracide : thou vile mischievous Slave.
Unto thy right hand nought thou owst, all things performed bee
O woe is mee that ever I liv'de this lucklesse day to see.
Where am I now ? Alas, alas, the light and all doth mee
Abhor : O wretched Œdipus this looke is first for thee.
Chor. See, see, where Jocasta coms, with fierce and furious moode,
Quight past her selfe. For very rage shee frets and waxeth woode.
Much like to Cadmus daughter mad, who late hir Sonne did kill.
Fayne would she speake her mynde : for feare (alas) she dares not : still
Shee stayes, and yet from out her breast these ills have quight exilde
All shamefastnes. See how shee lookes, with count'naunce fierce and wilde.

Joc. Fayne would I speake, I am afraide. For what should I thee call
My Son? doubt not. Thou art my Son. My Son thou art for all
These mischiefs great: alas, alas I shame my Son to see.
O cruell Son. Where dost thou turn thy Face? Why dost thou flee
From me. From me thy Mother deare? Why dost thou shun my sight?
And leave me thus in misery, with Cares consumed quight.
Œd. Who troubles me? Let me alone. I thought not to be founde:
Who now restores myne Eyes to mee, Mother? or Mothers sounde?
Our labour all is spent in vayne, now may wee meete no more,
The Seas devide those meetings vile that wee have had before.
The gaping earth devide us both, th' one from th' other quight.
Still let our feete repugnant bee. So shall I shun the light
That most of all me grieves. So shall I space obtaine to wayle
These bleeding woes on every side, that doe my thoughtes assayle.
Joc. The Destenies are in fault. Blame them. Alas, alas, not wee.
Œd. Spare now. Leave of to speake in vayne, spare now O Mother mee,
By these Reliques of my dismembred body I thee pray.
By myne unhappy Children pledges left. What shall I say?
By all the Gods I thee beseech. By all that in my name
Is good or bad, let mee alone. Alas you are to blame
To trouble mee. You see what hell my haplesse heart doth payne.
You see that in my Conscience ten thousand horrors raine.
Joc. O dying heart: O sindrownd soule. Why dost thou faint alas?
Why dost thou seeke and toyle in vayne these ills to overpas?
What meane these sighes, and scalding teares? why dost thou death refuse?
Thou mate of all his mischiefs thou, by whose meanes onely rues
The law of nature all: by whom, Ah, Ah, confounded lies,
Both God, and man, and beast, and all that eyther lives or dies.
Die thou, dispatch at once thrust through thy vile incestuous brest:
Thou hast none other meanes (alas) to set thine heart at rest.

Not thou, if God him selfe, if he his flaming fiers should throw
On thee, or mischiefs all by heapes upon thy body strow,
Couldst once for thy deserved ills due paines or vengeaunce pay :
Some meanes therefore to wreak Gods wrath upon thy selfe assay.
Death, death now best contenteth mee, then seeke a way to dye.
So maist thou yet at length finde end for all thy misery.
O Son lend mee thy hand : sith that thou art a Paracyde,
This labour last of all remaynes, this labour thee doth byde.
Dispátch rid mee thy mother deare from all my deadly woe :
It will not be : no prayers availe. Thy selfe this deede must doe.
Take up this sword. Goe to, with this thy husbande late was slayne.
Husband ? thou term'st him false : hee was thy syer : O deadly payne.
Shal I quight through my brest it drive ? or through my throte it thrust ?
Canst thou not choose thy wound ? away : die, die, (alas) thou must.
This hateful womb then wound (O wretch) this, this with thine own hand
Strike, strike it hard : (O spare it not) sith both a husband, and (The same a Son it bare.)
Chor. Alas, alas, shee is slaine, she is slayne, dispatched with a push :
Who ever sawe the like to this : see how the bloud doth gush.
O heavy doulfull case : who can this dyrefull sight enduer
Which for the hideousnesse thereof might teares of stones procuer :
Œd. Thou God, thou teller out of Fates. On thee, on thee, I call
My Father onely I did owe, unto the Destinies all.
Now twise a Paracide, and worse than I did feare to bee :
My Mother I have slayne, (Alas) the fault is all in mee.
O Œdipus accursed wretch, lament thine owne Calamity,
Lament thy state, thy griefe lament, thou Caitife borne to misery.
Where wilt thou now become (alas ?) thy Face where wilt thou hyde ?
O myserable Slave, canst thou such shamefull tormentes byde ?
Canst thou which hast thy Parents slain ? Canst thou prolong thy life ?
Wilt thou not dye ? deserving Death : thou cause of all the griefe,

And Plagues, and dreadfull mischiefs all that Thebane City prease.
Why dost thou seeke by longer life, thy sorrowes to encrease ?
Why dost thou toyle and labour thus in vayne ? It will not bee.
Both God, and man, and beast, and all abhorre thy Face to see.
O Earth why gapst thou not for me ? why doe you not unfolde
You gates of hell mee to receave ? why doe you hence withholde
The fierce Infernall Feends from me, from me so wretched wight ?
Why breake not all the Furyes lose this hatefull head to smight
With Plagues ? which them deserved hath (alas) I am left alone,
Both light, and sight, and comfort all from mee (O wretch) is gone.
O cursed head : O wicked wight, whom all men deadly hate.
O Beast, what meanst thou still to live in this unhappy state ?
The Skies doe blush and are ashamed, at these thy mischiefes great :
The Earth laments, the Heavens weepe, the Seas for rage doe freat,
And blustring rise, and stormes doe stir, and all thou wretch for thee,
By whose incest, and bloudy deedes all things disturbed bee.
Quight out of course, displaced quight, O cursed fatall day,
O mischiefes great, O dreadfull times, O wretch, away, away.
Exile thy selfe from all mens sight, thy life halfe spent in misery,
Goe end consume it now outright in thrise as great calamity.
O lying Phœbe thine Oracles my sin and shame surmount :
My Mothers death amongst my deedes, thou never didst recount.
A meete Exploict for me that am to Nature deadly Foe.
With trembling fearefull pace goe forth, thou wretched monster goe,
Grope out thy wayes on knees in darke thou miserable Slave.
So maist thou yet in tract of time due paynes and vengeaunce have
For thy mischevous lyfe. Thus, thus, the Gods themselves decree.
Thus, thus, thy Fates : thus the skyes appoint it for to bee.
Then headlong hence, with a mischiefe hence, thou caitife vyle away.
Away, away, thou monstrous Beast. Goe, Run. Stand, stay,
Least on thy Mother thou doe fall.

All you that wearyed bodies have, with sickenesse overprest,
Loe, now I fly : I fly away, the cause of your unrest.
Lift up your heads : a better state of Ayre shall strayght ensewe
Whan I am gone : for whom alone, these dreadfull myschiefs grewe.

And you that now, halfe dead yet live in wretched misers case,
Help those whom present torments presse forth, hye you on apace.
For loe, with me I cary hence all mischiefes under Skyes,
All cruell Fates, Diseases all that for my sake did ryse,
With mee they goe : with me both griefe, Plague, Pocks, Botch, and all
The ills that eyther now you presse, or ever after shall.
With me they goe, with me : these Mates bin meetst of all for mee,
Who am the most unhappiest wretch that ever Sun did see.

FINIS